The Pastor

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The Pastor

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New Year—see pp. 12, 31; see also Nov. issue and "The Christian Year" (Sept. issue).
Race Relations Day—see p. 43; see also Jan. issue.
Lent and Easter—see pp. 11 (for sermon themes), 23, 27, 28, 34, 48. Other features for Lent and Easter will appear in Jan.-Mar. issues.

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EDITORIAL

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

WHAT shall the Church say about the message of the heavenly hosts during Advent this year? How shall the Church talk of peace when there is no peace but only the same old agonies and confusions that plagued mankind before this sorry business of World War II started. Violence continues over the earth. Old imperialisms have returned, and the uneasy thing we call peace is characterized by disease, famine, persecution and death. Nations plead in fear that they desire peace; industrial groups bargain for what they think is peace; individuals crave a respite from the anxiety and dark perplexity of it all.

Surely, the Church must have something to say about all this. What shall it say?

In the first place, the Church can say that peace is conditional: peace depends upon ascribing *glory to God in the highest.* Secondly, the Church can preach the central reality of our faith: God has come in Jesus Christ to save men *from their sins,* not to give them peace *in their sins.*

We might as well face the fact that preaching these doctrines will be no easy matter this Advent. Twentieth century secularism has declared these doctrines out of date. *Glory to God in the highest* has become "Glory to MAN in the highest" in our time of impressive scientific discovery and technical advance. As Swinburne sang of him, man has become "the master of things." Forgetting his creaturehood, man has embarked on a path of self-glorification, singing the praises of class or race or nation. The gratification of self has taken the place of the worship of the sovereign God, and man has accepted the creed which a professor defended in a book of literary criticism several years ago: "MY will be done!"

It has followed that the human will centered upon itself has rejected the idea of a divine redeemer. The doctrine of the Incarnation seems foolish and incredible in our age of pride in human wit and skill. We would create our own gods. We would save ourselves. But the question arises: Will we be realistic enough to see ourselves as we really are?

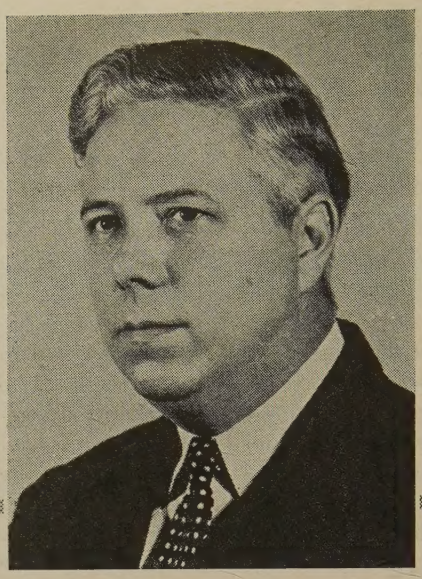
It would do Americans good this Advent to take a serious look at antiquity; for in antiquity we could see ourselves! Look at those Romans when God set his everlasting light in Bethlehem's streets. Roman ingenuity and enterprise had achieved the highest standard of living (for some Romans) on earth. Roman "go-gettiveness and know-how" had awed the world. There was no power on earth to compete with Rome, with her largest army and navy and vast material resources. Romans were dazzled by their own wit and skill, but they were progressive about it all. They reasoned that, since other peoples were backward, it was economically sound and politically wise to rule these peoples. And since Rome was world master, the world existed for Roman pleasure. Roman arrogance became a deadly disease, killing creativity and ever lusting for more luxury and power. Romans became less and less capable of seeing the truth about themselves. Patrician women, for example, exposed their unwanted babies to the beasts in order to revel in the vanities of the times. They never suspected that the Baby of a humble Jewish woman would become the judge of their perversity. Maybe Christina Rossetti was right when she described our Lord's birth "In the bleak midwinter"; for, regardless of the weather in Palestine when He came, our Lord did come into the midwinter of man's sin and self-imposed exile. The chill of death hovered over that Roman world when He came to be adored by shepherds, in whom some tenderness still lived. The icy hearts of the proud and successful would not receive Him. Those Romans saw only the stars of their own splendor; they did not see the Star. They did not hear the angels sing. Those Romans could not imagine that God would come like this. With their ideas of success and power, they could not imagine that the birth of a Jewish Baby was judging them, just as Americans cannot imagine that the thousands of babies, who will starve in Europe before Christmas, are judging us. How we like to live in a land of make-believe!

Human self-sufficiency has run its course. Man does need a Saviour. According to the Christian faith, God came to effect our redemption through our struggle. He might have set up a sort of government-in-exile, a sort of deistic conception of keeping men orderly. But He didn't. To use a figure of C. S. Lewis, He landed in disguise because He did not want to violate our free will. He came as a leader to set up a resistance movement against evil. He came as a friend to give us power to overcome our sins. He came in the visible and the sensible in order that we might see his grace and truth, and seeing join his cause forever.

Now it is Advent again. And Advent has traditionally been a time for preparing the hearts of the faithful for the joy of Christmas. But Christmas peace and joy are not for arrogant, unrepentant people. Scrooge had to see his ghosts before he could be ready for the music of Christmas bells. So does man in 1945.

Preaching the Incarnation, we see, means preaching peace as no easy matter. Our Lord's peace, as the heavenly hosts sang of it, means the conquest of cowardice, the liberation from evil desire, the freedom from pride and hate. Peace means the surrender to God in the highest, who is in Jesus reconciling men to himself—and who is in Jesus combating every social evil we know.

A Sermon



God's

Our Lord has his own final citation for distinguished service, says Roy H. Short, Editor, *The Upper Room*, who discusses here the basis upon which Christians are honored on the last day.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

IN ARLINGTON Cemetery across the river from Washington, America erected after the first World War a beautiful memorial "to the unknown soldier" and all the nameless group which he represented. In the memorial there is a collection of distinguished service medals, badges of honor, memorial wreaths and other tokens of recognition which have been placed upon the tomb by rulers and representatives of various nations of the earth who have visited there. The collection makes a profound impression, with its silent recognition of the principle of honor to whom honor is due.

In our own day, this principle of according honor to whom honor is due is properly recognized, and we hear of various distinguished awards having been received by servicemen, particularly the purple heart, dating back to the days of Washington and the Continental Army.

Christians have long thought in terms of God's acting upon this same principle and at the final day honoring those to whom honor is due. They have talked of a heaven to be gained and of glorious eternal rewards in the far tomorrow. Sometimes they have been almost grossly materialistic in their ideas, and far too literal in their interpretations of such colorful language as that of Revelation. But frequently they have had differing notions as to what it is for which God will honor men at the final day.

Some Christians have insisted that on that day God will honor men for the correctness of their theological ideas. The Church in the early centuries affirmed this flatly and emphatically. It said concerning its creeds, *He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.* And it anticipated what it presumed would be the judgment of God for heresy by burning the unorthodox at the stake. A striking example of this opinion is found in that colorful character of the last century, Father Taylor of Boston. Father Taylor believed God would reward men for the correctness of their beliefs and condemn them to hell for their heresies. He got along very well until he met Emerson, who was regarded as a heretic in his day. Until Father Taylor met him he was sure that Emerson would land finally in the lake of fire and brimstone, but after he met him and found what a lovable character he was he confessed that he did not know where to expect him to go, for his opinions would surely keep him out of heaven, while his good character would keep him out of hell.

Some other Christians have insisted that God will honor men at the final day for their fidelity to the demands of religious ritual. This has been particularly true of some who have made much of the matter of baptism. There is a Negro spiritual in which the question is raised, "Have you been redeemed?" And the answer comes back, "Certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord." Then the question is asked, "Have you been baptized?" And again the answer comes back, "Certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord." Then to make it still more definite the third verse asks, "Have you been to the pool?" And again the familiar answer comes, "Certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord."

Still other Christians have said that God will reward men for their church attachment. They have insisted upon one true visible Church, and have felt that God will honor men by-and-by upon the basis of their identification with that Church. Few things are more amusing to the churchman with the gift of humor and a sense of historical perspective than the wealth of claims and counter claims among churches as to which is the true Church.

Jesus taught clearly that God will honor certain persons at the final day. His teaching upon this subject was given in the form of a picture, the

Purple Heart

By
ROY H. SHORT

picture of the final judgment when the King of all the earth shall separate men as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. God's purple heart will then be awarded. It will not be some material reward, but rather the welcome words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Notice those whom the King of all kings will reward at the final day.

First of all, God's purple heart will be awarded to those who have been men and women of profound sympathies. It will be given to those who have thought in terms of people.

There are some men who think primarily in terms of things. They have hands with the skill of the craftsman, and minds with the ingenuity of the engineer. Their great ambition is to create something that has use and value, impressiveness and perhaps beauty. They find great joy in surveying the finished product of their labors as an artist does his painting or a sculptor his masterpiece, or a carpenter the cabinet or table or chair which he has made.

There are some men who think primarily in terms of money. To obtain it is their ambition, and the amount which they obtain is the measure of their estimation of success or failure in life. They are like Richard Croker who was long connected with Tammany Hall in New York, who said bluntly in the course of an investigation, "I work for my own pocket all the time."

There are men who think primarily in terms of ideas. They love to revel in the mysteries of philosophy and to lose themselves in the contemplation of the abstract. They furnish the material for the world's company of absent-minded professors and what we sometimes call its day dreamers.

But there are also men who think in terms of people. They love people. They enjoy being with people. Their hearts go out to people. People are their major interest. Their ambition in life is not to make something, however fine, or to gain money, by whatever laudable means; or even to master the secrets of knowledge—but to help people. Back in 1932 Evangeline Booth visited Los Angeles. Will Rogers was living then and writing his syndicated column. One day in his column he said, "We have a remarkable woman out here in Los Angeles at the present time, Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army. Some men deal in money. . . . She deals in people. . . . She seeks nothing from us but our down-and-out."

Those to whom God's purple heart will be awarded will be those who have thought in terms of people to be served. There are men, who desire a reward, who are interested in people. Such is that industrialist who sees in people only so many "hands" to operate his machines when the market calls for supply and to be set aside to shift as best they can when the demand for production falls off, and who thinks in terms of hiring them at the lowest wage it is possible to offer in the light of the labor market situation. Such is that politician, who professes a sincere interest in people, and who does a great deal of handshaking and baby kissing before election but who in his heart regards the people as only so many votes by which his own ends may be accomplished.

But the man whom the King will delight to honor some day will be he of the great heart who is sincerely interested in people—not because of what they can do for him but because of what he can do for them. He will be the man who is interested in starving people, thirsty people, travel-stained, and dust-covered; strangers, with their queer dress and queerer ways; ragged people, with their patches and tatters; sick people, with their offensive odors and pitiable helplessness; prisoners with their hard faces and sometimes cynical attitudes.

Jesus was interested in people. He went one day to Nazareth where he was brought up and stood up in the synagogue to read. There was handed unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah and he was invited to select a passage for reading. The choice was with him. Did you ever think about what he might have chosen? He might have chosen the passage that foreshadowed his virgin birth. He might have chosen the passage that looked forward to the era of peace when he should reign in righteousness. He might have chosen

the chapter which foreshadowed his cross. Rather, he chose and read those blessed words, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.* He was interested in people—needy people . . . and at the final day God will honor those who are Christlike in this respect.

God's purple heart will be awarded to those who have done something about the needs of needy people. One of the tragedies of the human scene is that sometimes those who are moved with sympathy toward those in need, stop with sympathy. John Wesley gives us an interesting example in the case of his father and mother. His father was an emotional man. His heart went out to people in need, and tears came to his eyes easily. On the other hand, his mother was largely unemotional, and tears seldom came to her eyes, and some people regarded her as severe. But the father frequently stopped with his sympathies, while the mother, displaying less visible sympathy, actually did more for those in need. Wesley said of the two of them, "Mother did not feel for others as much as father, but actually she felt ten times more." There is always danger in entertaining sympathies and stopping at that.

Those whom God will honor not only feel sympathy for needy people, but they do something about the situation. Notice that Jesus says, *Ye gave me meat . . . ye gave me drink . . . ye clothed me.* We are always tempted to let someone else do something about it. A little girl was given a dime by her mother to give to missions. Later her father found her spending it for ice-cream. He said to her, "I thought you were going to give your dime to the missionaries." She answered, "I thought I'd div it to the ice-cream man and let him div it to the missionaries."

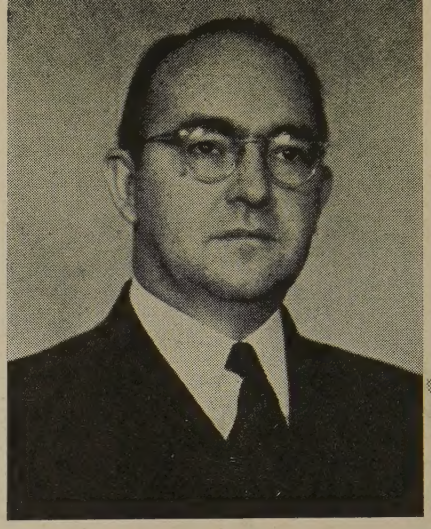
Often when we come to the point of doing something, we omit to do it personally. One of the shortcomings of present day philanthropy is that we let others act for us and content ourselves with writing a check for some philanthropic organization.

Too many people have thought that helping the needy involves just helping the needy. But for intelligent people it involves more. To feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner, involves far more than just doing these things themselves. It involves doing something about the system that makes for people who are hungry and naked and in prison. The seeds of far-reaching social revolution are inherent in the Gospel. It was with this in mind that James Russell Lowell said long years ago, "There is dynamite in the New Testament if anyone should ever discover it there."

God's purple heart will be awarded to those who in all their service are noble in spirit.

There is an interesting element in Jesus' parable of the judgment where he affirms that when the King rewards those whom he delights to honor they are filled with great surprise. They will not have thought of themselves as having done anything particularly significant or outstanding or commendatory. That is to say, they will have been doing these things for the love of doing them. And they will turn to the King and say, *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Here is a striking quality of great and service-rendering souls. They are unconscious of the contribution they make. They do what they do for the world's sake.

Finally, let us note one strange expression in this remarkable story of Jesus. It is the expression, *Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* What does that mean? Well, I take it that it does not refer to a glorious city in the skies brought into being when the worlds were brought into being. Rather I take it that it means that from the beginning the universe has been a moral order, and such it will continue to be unto the end of time. And because that is true those who find ways to serve find the bread cast upon the waters returning to them after many days.



By
O. CLARENCE MITCHELL

RELIGION is the relationship of man to the forces in his universe — God and His World, other men. Religion, to be genuine, must be free, voluntary, without coercion. When the religious life is controlled directly or indirectly by unsocial conditions it becomes an opiate to the minds of the people and functions to deaden the social consciousness. When religion is free it points to the liberation of the mind and spirit of the people for social progress.

I have long pondered the service of religion as a real social force in the coal fields where I minister. As it is presented in most of our communities, I can see in it no challenge to actual better living conditions or social development. It does not project any social vision, and certainly does not support the Christian doctrine of human values. It functions simply to bring comfort to individuals; the basis of which comfort is pretty largely traditional conservatism, and usually ignorant superstition.

Religion may become a tool of conservative investors. The coal companies exist for the purpose of producing coal and everything is correlated to that purpose.

The coal company builds the church in its community, and appoints in many instances a public relations officer to the church council, which is the governing body of the local congregation. This body employs the minister who "must fit" into the scheme of things from the viewpoint of the coal producers and the congregation itself.

By "captive religion" the writer means that variety which is presented as a moral sedative rather than a social force in a coal-mining section. Mr. Mitchell, who is pastor of Nighbert Memorial Methodist Church, Logan, W. Va., discusses here the alternative facing pastors in the coal fields—the alternative which the Church-at-large faces.

Captive Religion

The congregation in most instances is without social vision and understands religion in terms of personal salvation alone, which fits into the deliberate or blind purpose of the coal company. I know of one instance, in particular, where the public relations man of the coal company said that it was his responsibility "to see that the minister was on a social and cultural level" with the occupants of the coal camps, so that the minister would suit the people and would have no radical social ideas—such as "religion is to make better the total life of the community."

It is my belief that ignorance of the function of religion on the part of the officers of the coal companies is largely responsible for the type of ministers who come to the coal camp. In this county, with a population of 70,000, there are at least a hundred men preaching in the coal camps who are employed on week days by the coal company in the mines as laborers. They have no training in religion and many of them barely read—certainly not with understanding.

Captive religion can offer no challenge. As one company physician said to me, "Orthodoxy is the safest thing." Preachers are supposed to preach the old-time religion and sing, "I am contented to live in a hut by the side of the road; for I have a mansion in heaven." Therefore religion must be a matter purely individual, offer no moral or social challenge whatsoever, and be devoid of all social idealism. It must not know that housing is inadequate, that sanitation is non-existent, that there is a need for recreation, that schools need improvement, and especially that a man has a right to social and cultural opportunities when he produces day by day for his employer.

I know of a minister who once set out to get adequate recreation facilities in the way of a park, swimming pool, ball field, et cetera, for the children of the miners. He was opposed immediately by the illiterate "day laborer" preachers on the grounds that the business of religion was to "save souls." Thus the leadership of wisdom was defeated by the ignorance of the preacher on the "social, cultural level" of the community, and the coal company was saved the expense of providing recreational facilities.

One of the major problems to be overcome is the old sociological one of absentee ownership. One of the larger coal companies in the county is owned 100 per cent and another 75 per cent by New York and Philadelphia banks, or stock companies.

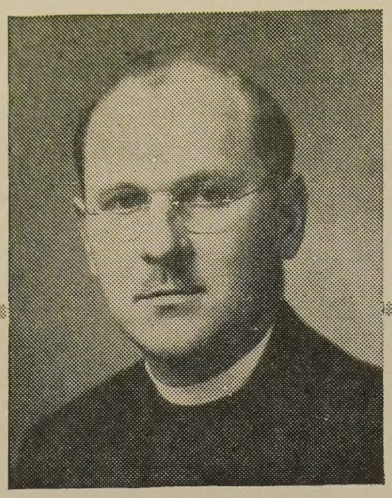
There is an unwritten conspiracy between the exploiter and the ignorant preacher, in which case the religious leaders will deal with no vital social problem and touch few religious problems. The companies will continue to produce without great regard to the human element and no regard to the cultural element; and the miner's daughters will continue to feed into the beer joints and the miner and his son take to orgies of drink, gambling, and occasionally a "religious" one, for emotional outlet.

"Without vision the people perish." Thus racism thrives and the color line becomes more and more marked, the whiskey ring grows fat —"for the miner must have his drink to keep him happy." Wages, even though comparatively high, are dissipated and not used for the making of good living, the making of home or good community life, and the coal country becomes the crooked politician's paradise.

Unless religion can go into the coal fields on its own, build its own church, preach the Christian message of human values—which is the redemption of the total life of the total people—it might as well stay out. If the leadership in the coal companies and in the labor union really wants religious leadership that points somewhere and would be a redemptive saving salt in the communities, then religion should be unshackled. Coal companies could contribute to the building of churches and community centers and recreational facilities without deliberately or inadvertently circumscribing the message and usefulness of the religious leaders. A gift should be a gift and not a "controlling interest."

There are many good men in the coal communities who are anxiuos for the religious redemption of the people. They need aid in understanding the total purpose of God and how that purpose may find expression in their communities. That they need aid in creating social organization that assesses the full fundamental human values involved is quite clear. It is believed that they will respond to the full social challenge when the method of creating a Christian social order is clear to them. These men, whether they be mine superintendents, store managers, clerks, mine engineers or what not, will respond socially and fully when and where the challenge is clearly presented to them.

Religion standing on its own feet should bring that challenge.



Angel Anthems

An atomic age may have little use for angels, but the Church is still under obligation to hear their exacting and glad message, says O. Walter Wagner in this sermon for the Christmas season. He is pastor of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church, Jackson, Mich.

"For unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder. . . . Fear not. I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . Glory to God. . . . Peace on earth. . . . Goodwill among men."

THESE old words are "must" messages this Advent season. The music of Christmas is the most timely and timeless message of the hour. Angel anthems must be America's reply to the atomic age.

Each new age has a way of announcing itself with a call characteristic of that age. The Christian era began with angels' anthems. The Reformation began with a hammer blow. The industrial age was ushered in by a steam whistle. The atomic age came with a bomb's explosion.

The music of the Christian era may be explained away as a myth, or pushed aside as the poetic writing of an enthusiastic scribe, or identified as folk songs of passing travelers on the way to enroll themselves in their native cities; but it is still a symbol of the birth of Christianity.

The hammer blows of the monk of Erfurt upon the Church door of Wittenberg pounded into the ears of a new Protestantism 95 criticisms against ecclesiastical tyranny. The sound of that mallet is still a loud melody wherever reforms are launched, challenging men to save the Church from sterility.

Fulton's steamboat whistle was the opening note of the industrial age. Its call brought an end to agrarian culture in American life. It called the common people to the factories. It summoned the farmers to the cities. Today it calls citizens into sharp conflict with an industrial culture. It is the symbol of our economic strife.

Our latest age came like thunder. A bomb and a blast, and a city's gone and an age is at an end. Does it forewarn an age of death and destruction? Is it a symbol that points to defeat for civilization? Does it drown out all the other music of the spheres? Is it a premonition of our doom, or does it awaken civilization to see the divine in angel songs?

The validity of any sign is not in its timeliness so much as its timelessness. Many a sermon that exhibits up-to-the-minute smartness may not have enduring value. Many a song that tops the "hit parade" may never be sung by our children. Many a symbol that stands as a sign of a time may fail to save society in the hour of crisis. Only angel anthems are valid evangels bearing the timely and the eternal.

The hammer blow of the Reformation was a timely signal challenging men to reform a corrupt Church. Criticism is a constructive force in periods of reform. Criticism is the catalytic of the conscience of society, but it is not the creative song of the soul. The hammer of criticism denounces; the angel of the Lord announces.

Timely was the whistle that called to action the industrial age, but its service to society was limited. It called men to work and to seek work —to stop and to go. It did not release them from fear, nor from fatigue. It does not promise peace, prosperity, and plenty for all the people.

No one would dispute the timeliness of the atomic bomb. It broke upon the world in the midst of a horrible war. It showed the possibilities of total destruction. It said bluntly to the world that society cannot survive this recourse to science. It does not call men to be brothers. It does not rally men to goodwill. It sets nation against nation.

Either, Or

Never before have all the peoples of the world been forced to think in terms of "either, or." Either we socialize atomic energy, or it will bring suicide to civilization. Either we convert the bomb into a birthright of peace and plenty for all the people, or it will destroy us all. We must now choose between a bomb's blast and an angel's anthem. Our choice is between perfected power and perfect love.

Our salvation is in hearing above the noise of civilization's selfish strife, the aspiration expressed in Handel's "Messiah": "Unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Our confidence will be strengthened when we hear the voice of an angel announcing, *Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* Our part is to join the heavenly host, singing: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

On the first Christmas of the "Atom Age" the obligation is upon us to hear the anthems of the angels—but an atomic age has little use for angels. Let us state it bluntly: The angels of the myth, biblical and secular, are but the picturesque and poetic embodiment of God's voice. They would not stand the test of F.B.I. investigations. They would surely elude any dullard who wished to see their

in Our Atomic Age

A SERMON

By O. WALTER WAGNER

wings; but the angels are still with us. There were angels; there are angels; there will always be angels. Angels are the messengers of God. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. God has always spoken and will continue to speak with man. Sometimes his voice is in the burning bush. Sometimes he speaks through the still small voice. Sometimes he stands before an age as an angel, saying, *Fear not; behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . Unto you is born this day a Saviour.*

The oldest Christmas anthem has its origin in an Old Testament aspiration. Israel, beaten and oppressed by stronger nations to the north, and by enemies to the south, looked for a leader who would be the messiah of a new order. When we sing the words of Isaiah, we are voicing an ancient aspiration for political leadership. This comes as a shock to twentieth century Christians who have made a false virtue of keeping out of politics. Christmas and citizenship are inseparable. Religion and politics are both Bible bred. The first characteristic of the Messiah in the oldest anthem is political leadership: *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.*

Nor is this an isolated case. It represents the full flowering of biblical tradition. The Old Testament is saturated with the idea that religious men must be politically minded. Moses is best understood as an aggressive labor organizer and as a sagacious politician. Amos and Micah were enraged farmers who saw the havoc wrought by a commercial civilization, and sought political reforms. Isaiah and Jeremiah were city men who knew the sordid politics of their nation, and described the vision of a political internationalism that would allow the nations to beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. The prophet Jehu, and the Rachabites, as Henry Wallace says in his treatise on the prophets, were the communists of their day, who in their hatred of commercial corruption, returned to the simple life and vowed under no circumstances to own the land. They sought through political reform to set up a socialist state. In thousands of Israelite hearts the word of Isaiah expressed their political hopes: *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.*

The atom age which started with nations in a death struggle, sorely needs this old song. The Christian Church must again see the necessity of political action and take responsibility for it. The great prophets dreamed of generations in which mankind would slowly advance to a warless world. Time has now run out. If we do not achieve a peaceful world through political action in our day, the only prospect is that of a worldless universe. The Church's greatest Christmas gift to civilization in this year One of the Atomic Age, must be to assure mankind that atomic energy shall become the property of society, and that never again shall humanity be blasted by the atom bomb.

If this is to be the Church's gift to civilization, it means a new and vital interest in an ancient hope: *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.* The Church must lead the people into an international commonwealth in which the people co-operatively control atomic power.

Atomic energy makes possible two basic objectives of the good society: security and freedom. In the fulness of the one we can realize the other. A people well fed, well clothed, well housed, planning its own welfare, is a free people, competent to live in peace, dignity and liberty.

All ages announce themselves with timely symbols, but only the messenger of God answers the eternal needs of the ages. The angel of the Lord stands once more before the people saying: *Fear not . . . behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. . . . For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Confidence that mankind will accept the leadership of the Messiah is possible only if we adopt the ancient resolve: *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.* The Church must again move into the realm of political and economic realism and find there a very religious task.

The early Christians answered the angels with astonishing dispatch. The first congregations were communities. They held all things in common. They provided generously for widows and orphans. They ransomed Christians in prison for debt. They won a new status for women. They awakened slaves to a sense of worth and a longing for freedom that broke out in revolt against their masters. They disturbed the patriotism and loyalty of citizens to Caesar. They stirred throughout the Roman world a social unrest. Within two centuries they transformed the world. They were socially, politically, economically and religiously effective.

The fall of vital Christianity took place when the Church surrendered to military power her concern for the common life. The Church lost her mission when she accepted the sword of Constantine, and became reconciled to war. In rapid succession she blessed ecclesiasticism, organized a priestly class, and became shackled with institutionalism. She betrayed her Messianic mission.

The choice is again before us. The atomic bomb has made the choice inevitable. The Church must now choose between Christ and crisis, between a community life and chaos. Christmas this year must spur us to concern and action. Christmas is our obligation to make the Lordship of Jesus totally effective.

He Cannot Be Hid

Though He came in utmost simplicity, Jesus could not be hid, says B. M. Hunt, pastor, Main Street Methodist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss. The text: Mark 7:24.

JESUS was born in an unpretentious manger. The innkeeper was not looking for Him. Jesus came in the utmost simplicity. But he could not be hid. Shepherds came from the fields when they heard the angels sing. Wise men came from the East.

In the scripture setting of the text, we read, *And from thence He arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid.* Then the Syrophenician woman came with a plea in behalf of her daughter. Jesus could not be hid because of the presence of human need.

Jesus drew men like a magnet. When He would lead his disciples apart to rest awhile, the multitude found their way to him. He could not be hid.

Jesus died the death of a criminal. Yet the centurion was so impressed by the difference of his spirit to that of the others that he exclaimed, *Surely this is the Son of God.*

The centurion classified Jesus in a separate category. Jesus could not be hid.

The body of Jesus was buried in a sepulcher. The tomb was sealed. The Roman soldiers stood guard. The disciples were completely disheartened. The women mourned. But *he could not be holden of death.* He arose from the dead. Surely the universe is behind Jesus.

And so today we are confronted with the amazing figure of Jesus—his life, teachings, deeds, death, resurrection, his knock at the door of our hearts. Many outstanding personalities appear in the headlines, hold the spotlight for a season, and then pass on. But Christ stands before us ageless, final. His glory does not dim. And today strong men and noble women are crusading for Christ. When Christian disciples manifest Christian attitudes, the world takes knowledge that they have been with Jesus.

In literature Christ cannot be hid. For centuries the best literature has been vital with a sense of the presence of God. It has been saturated with Christian standards. It has kept alive in terms of beauty the significance of the moral ideals of duty, loyalty, honor, courage, sacrifice, and service. Think of Wycliffe, Bunyan, Milton, Wordsworth, Dickens, Browning, and Tennyson. These men have shown how disaster follows the violation of the moral order of the universe; that wrong doing brings individual failure and social wreckage. These authors have believed in the ultimate triumph of justice and righteousness.

In art Christ cannot be hid. In the ancient catacombs there remain the engravings of men's faith. In the museums and cathedrals can still be found some of the masterpieces inspired by Christ. The outstanding sculpture, the most beautiful architecture, show the impress of Jesus.

In music Christ cannot be hid. It is easy to recognize the inspiration of Bach, of Beethoven, Palestrina, Mozart, and Hayden.

In reforms Christ cannot be hid. Once while heads were falling like apples in gladiatorial combats, a fight was taking place in the Roman Coliseum. Sand covered the Coliseum floor a foot deep, and the sand had turned red with the blood of men and beasts. But before the mad crowd, Telemachus jumped out of his seat and leaping into the amphitheater cried, "This must stop in the name of Jesus Christ!" A dozen spears pierced his body, but there was never again such a spectacle of bloodshed.

Christ cannot be hid in our modern world. The Prince of Peace is trying to create an atmosphere that will remove the causes of war. He is trying to heal the wounded spirits. He is trying to build an enduring peace.

The consciences of men and women trained in the school of Christ are thinking of brotherhood in terms of obligation and comradeship. And in order to cleave to that which is good, the Christian conscience must abhor that which is evil. To be for sobriety means that we must be against intoxicating and brutalizing liquors. To be for economic justice means

A Sermon by B. M. HUNT

that we are against exploitation. *For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Christ cannot be hid because of our spiritual needs. Sin is deeply ingrained in the hearts of humanity. Evil is not an accidental or temporary outbreak. The heart of man is desperately wicked. The Son of God identified himself with all mankind in the Incarnation. He lived a life of perfect obedience. The crowning act of his obedience was his death. It was the moral quality of his suffering that gives redeeming value. The death of Christ was a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and through the blood of Christ we may have forgiveness of sins. Christ identified himself with the sinner. By faith the penitent sinner enters into a vital relationship to the Crucified One and dies to sin. Peter said, *Christ suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust.* Paul wrote, *While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* John wrote, *He is the propitiation for our sins.* The believer voluntarily identifies the self with Christ. Thus a vital union with Christ delivers from the power of evil.

Christ is light, and light cannot be hid. John said, *That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Jesus said of himself, *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* We trust in Jesus and the light of God shines into our hearts and we are forgiven.

Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the standard of our faith and practice. He tells us what our lives are to be like. We are not only to call Him Lord, we are to do the things which He says for us to do. We are to follow him. He is the Captain of our souls. He cannot be hid.

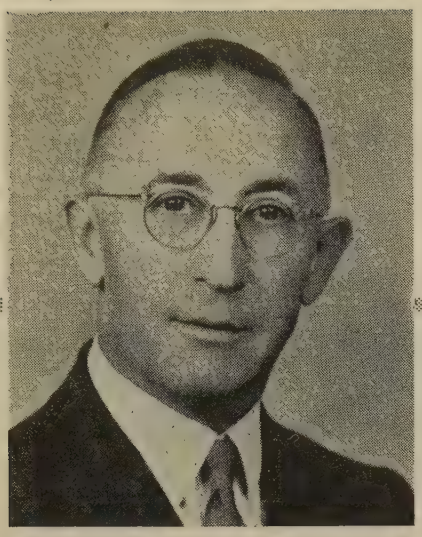
Jesus cannot be hid because of the grave. Men and women still weep beside open graves. The Grim Reaper still chills human hearts. But Christ warms these wounded spirits and binds up the brokenhearted. Christ went through the valley of the shadows. He died. He arose. He bids us not to be troubled. He points us to the heavenly mansions. The victorious Christ consoles, reveals to us the goodness of God and the worth of men in God's sight. Courage and faith come in fellowship with the triumphant, adventurous Christ.

Every person classifies himself around Jesus. It was so when Jesus lived in the flesh. The character of the innkeeper was revealed. The brutality of Herod was made manifest. The character of the scribes and high priests was made plain. And the moral nature of the disciples was revealed in their responses to Jesus. The character of Mary and of Martha, and of Joseph of Arimathea was revealed in the presence of Jesus. In the light of Christ's presence all character is revealed.

And let us remember that Christ cannot be hid in the judgment, *We shall all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* In Matthew, chapter twenty-five, we read of Jesus' own picture of the judgment. Jesus declared that the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory and separate the sheep from the goats. We think about Jesus as the brother who shared our toil, tasted our temptation, died our death; the Teacher who revealed God's truth, the Savior who bore our sins. He is also the Judge of all the world.

The same Book which declared, *God is love* also says that *Our God is a consuming fire.* John spoke of *the love of God.* He also spoke of *the wrath of the Lamb.* Jesus can judge out of his own intimate knowledge of life. He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. Think of your wisest and kindest friends knowing all your hidden sin and their growing amazement and pain. The tribunal of love is the most terrible tribunal there is. But Christ cannot be hid in the judgment, not even by the rocks and mountains. His words shall judge us at the last.

All authority in heaven and earth belongs to Christ. Yes, this universe is on the side of Christ. Nothing which is a contradiction to the spirit of Jesus ever works. In the background of human folly and sin, the figure of Jesus stands out in bold relief. He is our hope. *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.*



Preaching and Ou

It is the privilege of pastors to lead people to see meanings in our Communion Ritual which the average worshiper would otherwise miss, believes the pastor of Rock Bend Methodist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. He read this discussion before the Pittsburgh Preachers' Meeting.

THERE are few sermons on the sacraments in homiletical literature. This fact is acknowledged in Hugh Thompson Kerr's book on *The Christian Sacraments.* It is especially true of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Perhaps it has been assumed that the sacraments speak for themselves, that they are visible sermons. St. Augustine referred to them as "a visible word."

For the sake of the people our Communion Ritual needs to be interpreted, and preaching is one good method of interpretation. Perhaps then people could say something more worthy than "that was a beautiful service." One of the fine services rendered by *The Upper Room* is the interpretation of the cover pictures by Albert Bailey. He helps us see meanings in the pictures which the average person would otherwise miss. There are meanings in the Communion Ritual of which too many are ignorant, and we as pastors have a responsibility to help persons feel the profound meaning of the words.

Since the Church is becoming more and more ritualistic, we must avoid formalism by keeping vital the experiences that are imbedded in the ritual. As we introduce more of the priestly elements in our worship we must give earnest heed to the prophetic element in religion. The pulpit must point to the altar, but the altar must inspire the pulpit for the sake of a complete worship experience. If someone would do for the ritual what Halford E. Luccock has done for modern translations of the Bible, he would render a valuable service.

The only series of sermons based on the Communion Ritual I have found is in a book of sermons by Frederick Maurice, published in 1849. The sermons are based on the Communion Ritual of the Church of England, from which the Methodist Ritual is taken.

A partial analysis of our Communion Ritual will suffice to indicate some of its preaching values:

I. Names Given to the Sacrament

1. The Communion Service is referred to as *The Holy Sacrament.* The nature and significance of a sacrament is not a threadbare theme. It challenges our best effort at interpretation. A sacrament is realized only as we cease from self and are content to abide in Christ, or have Christ abide in us. We bind ourselves to Another and find in Him that which answers to the blank in us.

2. The Communion is called *This Memorial of His Death.* It is a perpetual memorial. It is a memorial of a living Person who was dead and is alive for evermore. It is a memorial we carry with us. We don't have to seek some distant shrine, but whenever and wherever we partake of the bread and wine in Christ's name and in obedience to his command there is the memorial of his death. The high use of memory can be enlarged on under this heading.

3. *Our Saviour Jesus Christ's Holy Institution* is another meaningful designation. It was not an afterthought of believers but originated in the mind and heart of Jesus out of a deep desire for fellowship with them. He said to his disciples, *With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.* Later He added, *Do this in remembrance of me.* How could disciples be anything but loyal after those words?

4. *This Thy Table* is another suggestive phrase. The words of the shepherd psalm immediately occur to us—*Thou preparest a table before me.* One of our hymns refers to it as a "feast of His mystic flesh and blood." The older ritual reads, "so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son and to drink His blood that we may live and grow thereby." These words needed not to have been deleted because these other words of the ritual give them a beautiful spiritual meaning: "Feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." William K. Anderson writes helpfully on this matter in his pamphlet, *The Sacraments of the Church.*

5. Still another phrase is *Our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving.* Here is a fine opportunity to preach on "Our Rational Ritual." "We offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice unto Thee." Paul can supply the text: *Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God which is your reasonable worship, or rational ritual.*

6. *Our bounden duty and service* is an appeal to the will. We are not always in a mood for worship. Should we refrain from the forms of worship at such times or absent ourselves from the Communion Service? If we begin that practice, the very impulse to worship will die. Perhaps that

Communion Ritual

By CECIL W. CAMPBELL

helps account for the alarming absenteeism from church services. If we at such times worship and take Communion as a "bounden duty and service" the exercise will become a delight to us. The psalmist wrote: *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.* Statutes can become songs, and duties delights.

II. Regarding the Invitation

The invitation is broad and inclusive. It reflects the words of Jesus, *I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance,* and *Whosoever will may come.* God's grace and love and law are no respecters of persons. *Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins* are invited. Repentance applies to everything that is contrary to the character of Jesus.

"*And are in love and charity with your neighbors.*" If we must get severe with folks, here is our justification. The ethical implications of the Communion are suggested by these words. We cannot be right with God regardless of our relations to men. *First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift.* Communion is not just a private affair. It is fellowship together with God.

And intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in His holy ways. Here we may deal with integrity and purity of motive. There is no magic in the Communion Service. The great question is, What are our motives and intentions? Repentance and the fruits of repentance can be treated from this invitation. It offers an opportunity for evangelistic preaching.

III. The Approach to Communion

1. *Draw near with faith.* That means faith in the power of God to forgive and sanctify. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* We may come with boldness to the throne of grace.

2. *Devoutly kneeling.* The relation of posture to worship is worthy of consideration. Soul and body affect each other. Position of body both reveals and induces certain attitudes of mind. In Longfellow's poem, Robert of Sicily "on Saint John's eve at vespers proudly sat and heard the priests chant the *Magnificat.*" There was no worship in that proud sitting bolt upright in his pew. Saint John's eve and vespers do not harmonize with pride, nor with the Communion Service.

3. *Make your humble confession to Almighty God.* Confession is the road to forgiveness. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Augustine's *Confessions* are a good example.

4. *Acknowledging our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time have grievously committed by thought, word or deed.* There is no room for self-righteousness. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican can be used in this connection.

5. *We do not presume.* Paul believed that the curse and misery of mankind were due to his trying to be something in himself apart from God. Striving to be independent, man became the most dependent of creatures —the slave of things he might have ruled and used to his own good and God's glory. The hymn "Rock of Ages" expresses the right attitude: "In my hands no price I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling." The ritual further reads, *Trusting not in our own righteousness but in Thy manifold and great mercies.* We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs which fall from Thy table. Church people are often accused of presumption, but the word "hypocrite" is used. Is not the person who so judges presuming upon his own righteousness? Humility is the key to Communion.

IV. Benefits of Communion

1. *Take and eat this Holy Sacrament to your comfort. Comfort ye my people,* said God to Isaiah. So many people in times of sorrow neglect and even shun the sources of comfort. They fail to find comfort in Him who is touched "with the feeling of our infirmities." Can we not help people find comfort in the Communion Service?

2. *Pardon and deliver us from all our sins.* Here is a twofold blessing—pardon and deliverance. Pardon alone is not sufficient. We need deliverance from the power of sin, for sin is as enslaving as God's grace is emancipating. "He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free."

3. *Confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life.* By a paradox we become good by denying our own goodness—*not having a righteousness of our own according to the law, but a righteousness of God which is through faith in Christ.* He it is who confirms and strengthens us. And this leads further to everlasting life.

4. *Filled with Thy grace and heavenly benediction. My cup runneth over.* We have a full gospel to preach.

V. Theological Themes

The Communion Ritual is also rich in theological content. If we are to preach the Gospel of God, we must know the character of God. We must preach as well as sing the "characters He bears." People need a vision of God. Their thoughts of God are too hazy.

The names of God given in the ritual are suggestive and appeal to the mind and heart and imagination. His is a "glorious Name." His name is "Father." Here is a good opportunity to make use of Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes' idea of parental theology as over against courtroom theology. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and "like Father, like Son." All this suggests the theme of a Christlike God. And God is a "Holy Father," which means that we also must be holy.

God is the "Maker of all things and the Judge of all men." The judgments of God are real and they are true and righteous. He weighs the hidden motives of men.

God's expectation of us is a helpful study. We pray that we may perfectly love Him and worthily magnify His holy name. God's place in the universe and in our lives is indicated in the ritual.

VI. CHRISTOLOGY

We find Christology in the Communion Ritual. To be able to put the great truths about Christ's Person into common speech is an ability one might covet.

Here Christ is "our Lord," "our Advocate with the Father." "He is the propitiation for our sins—and for the sins of the whole world." He is the Lamb of God as well as the Son of God. The second part of the "Gloria in Excelsis" is rich in the thought of the Lordship of Jesus.

"*He made a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.*" There is a sermon already outlined. Whatever is true in the satisfaction theory of the atonement is found here. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life" . . . for the sheep.

The words *the same night* appeal to the imagination. "The same night He was betrayed He took bread and gave thanks—and likewise after supper the cup." How could he do it? He uttered no complaint but poured out his soul in love for his disciples. The betrayal by Judas only emphasizes how really Jesus was giving his body for them. The worst act of man and the most loving act of our Saviour were going on at the same time—"the same night." That was the most significant night in history.

Can We

By M. WAYNE BROWN

EACH of us lives in two worlds: a world of objects and pressures and a world of relationships and meanings. The first is made up of sticks and stones, trees and flowers, rivers and valleys, animals and people. The second exists in feelings and ideas, hungers and satisfactions, strivings and frustrations, loyalties and values. These are our worlds—constantly interacting with each other. And on the basis of where you and I live in them, we may predict our destiny.

Without seeming to plead the case for environment, who of us can escape the evidence that our world of objects and pressures is constantly modifying our world of meanings? Restaurants that did only a "so-so" business change their color schemes and people flock inside to feast in a new atmosphere. Boys and girls become "dead-end kids" from living where our vices—yours and mine—are treated as virtues. Men and women sell their homes because a family of a different skin pigment moves into their neighborhood.

This outer world of objects and pressures is inescapable. We could not exist without it. Yet ultimately, though not absolutely, it is the inner world of the spirit and its meanings which holds our destiny. Unless we live in an inner world of richness and abundance, we live in vain!

We may best discover our address by seeking our relationships between the two worlds. For one thing, where do we live in relation to our experiences—past and present?

In the external world, our address may remain the same year in and year out. Yet how different it is in this other world—the inner one! It is like a mighty river—flowing, never stopping. It is never the same from one moment to the next. Yet how many of us try to live in this inner world as we do in the outer.

Many people have come to counseling periods in my study who were not living at today's address. They had identified themselves with some experience of failure or a feeling of guilt in the yesterdays and said, "I am that person; that's where I live!" Others who used to worship regularly in their churches, today never darken those doors. They think they are living at the same address as then. What a shock it would be to millions who believe they are living in the "goodness" of yesterday should they ever get their eyes open to their sins of today. Throngs of people who attended their churches and served in them before they moved to war jobs are living in a fool's paradise of yesterday's morality while today's looseness passes as just an interlude. Most of us, unless we stay constantly alert, succumb to the pressures of today and think of our address as a delightful or a dreadful yesterday.

Suppose Lincoln had accepted the address of disaster when he failed to achieve his early aims? Or for that matter, what if Jesus had stayed in Nazareth because he failed to perform any wonders there because of the unbelief. But no! Yesterday's frustrations may become today's fulcrum; today's fulcrum can produce tomorrow's fulfillment.

A friend of mine began to teach a men's Bible Class. Most of the men were successful business or professional men. Yet he discovered during the first class period that their religious experiences carried the address of twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years before. Most of them had dropped Sunday school in their teens and did not know that, with all their growth in other ways, they were in a horse-and-buggy era, religiously speaking.

Even some ministers are guilty. I remember a professor of mine who said that he was startled to discover, that ten years after their seminary training, many of his former classmates did not know what they believed on many basic issues. What happened?

Predict Our Destiny?

New Year's Sermon

Upon our ability to withstand the pressures of the external world depends our ability to predict our destiny, according to M. Wayne Brown, Methodist pastor at Duncan, Ariz. He discusses his theme in its relation to our spiritual growth, our attitude toward our vocation, and our attitude toward our money.

The minister leaves seminary with his thinking sharp and his convictions deep. He goes, perhaps, to a church where freedom of the pulpit is just a phrase. Then come the social and economic pressures that only a church can exert. Accommodation begins. Fuzzy words and phrases begin to creep into discussions because they get an emotional response. Gradually, the insidious work is done. The minister awakes to find that he has lost his address. He does not know where he lives; and neither do his people!

When it is so easy to accept ourselves as we were, sometimes even to boast that "I haven't changed a hair's breadth in twenty years," it is a dangerous thing to assume that we know our address in terms of our fund of experiences. Where do we live now?

Another way of getting at this address is to ask, "Where do I live in relation to my vocation?"

A prize-fighter, for example, can seldom if ever have an inner world that produces satisfying meanings. His vocation demands so much concentration upon so few areas of his capacities that there is no room for temples dedicated to music, literature, art, friendship, philosophy or religion. The external world of vocation so constricts the inner world of relatedness that the prize-fighter is reduced to hardly more than a function.

But prize-fighters are not oddities in this respect. It can happen to you working in war-plants; it can happen to you employed in offices and stores; it can happen to a minister; it can happen to anybody!

You and I can allow the pressures of vocation to encompass our thinking and acting and sleeping to such an extent that we do not possess our own lives. We become instead the property of an external world and exist as it functions. Do we not too often treat the grocer, the baker, the butcher less as persons and more as functions? "What we want is service!" Our whole economic system tends to make most of us a function rather than a person. As Roger Babson indicated to me recently in answer to a letter, labor is a commodity under our capitalistic system—whether we like it or not!

Unless we are cautious, our world may make mere functions out of us while we call ourselves persons because we can use the word. Here, the minister may as easily lose his address. How easy for him to respond to the urgency of the demands of the Kingdom; to forget that he has both social and personal roles incumbent upon him. There is always more to be done in any single day than he can possibly jam in. So family and friends and fun are neglected while the minister becomes a function: performing wedding ceremonies, holding funerals, going to this club and that committee meeting, reviewing this book, or preparing that sermon!

As busy as Jesus was, he could be found many times with his friends enjoying their fellowship; apart with nature drinking in its refreshment, or at a wedding feast joining in gaiety. Where do we live at this point? Does our inner world balance between vocation and avocation, monotony and creativity, sing-song and symphony? What kind of destiny does our address predict?

Again, where do we live in relation to our possessions—our money? Jesus reminds us that only with difficulty will those with riches enter the kingdom. Paul writing to Timothy states that, for him, the love of money is a root of all evil. As if to underscore his statement, he adds that when men fall away from the faith, they covet money. The reverse is also true: When men covet money, they fall away from the faith.

Does this not make a difference? Can a man treat a thing as his when it belongs ultimately to God? And yet our culture assumes that we own our money and that what we do with it is our own business. No wonder the rich man has such difficulty in entering the kingdom!

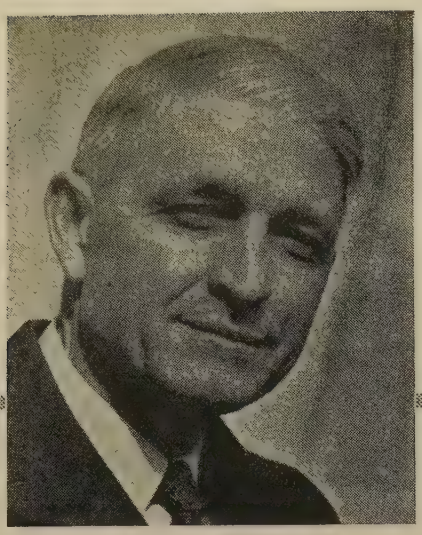
What a difference it makes in our inner world, whether we relate ourselves to our money as owner or steward. When we own it we fear for its loss and plan for its increase. The result is that we are owned by our money. But when our attitude is that of a steward, our money becomes either one, five, or ten talents entrusted by our Master.

As we turn to the last page of *The Apostle,* Reb Sabbatai Zadoc stands before the congregation of Christians, just after the execution of Peter and Paul, and speaks about this very matter:

" 'See you not what has happened in Rome? The more they burn the believers in the Messiah, the more they fling them to the beasts, the mightier grow their numbers. Behold! Rome went forth against Jerusalem with the sword, and Jerusalem went forth against Rome with the spirit. The sword conquered for a while, but the spirit conquers for ever!' " [1]

How are we withstanding the pressures of a modern Roman world? Do we see ourselves as yesterdays, or does the sun of God's grace rise anew each day within? Has our vocation demanded that we become a mere function or have we an inner world of breadth and depth and height? And what of our relation to our money? Have we been living with it as owner or as steward?

[1] From "The Apostle," copyright, 1943, by Sholem Asch. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.



Toward a Sane

The "philosophy of decentralization" sounds abstract and remote, but Ralph Templin describes it here in terms of factors that bear directly upon the daily lives of pastors and people—especially pastors and people who live in rural areas. A former Methodist educator in India, he has for several years been active in rural work, having recently served as rural consultant in the Institute on Town and Country Work of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

AMERICA has not yet realized that probably the most important trend in the nation is the movement of non-farming populations toward a modern life on the land. O. E. Baker, former population specialist of the Department of agriculture, in a letter in *Land and Home*, points out that, in the decade between 1930 and 1940, the farm population was declining while the rural population was increasing. This he says was due mainly to the growing rural-urban fringe or non-farming country dwellers. He says that "a new civilization is arising whose form is yet embryonic."

Professor J. H. Kolb, in his studies of the same group, shows that this group is the only one in which the birth rate is showing gains. Even the war and defense production have not been able to check this trend. In the *Land and Home* letter, Dr. Baker names three impulses which can be seen as forshadowing this arising "civilization." They are the urge to own—basically to own land and live on it; a revival of rural voluntary institutions; and the subordination of the material to the spiritual.

Decentralization, then, is more than a philosophy, more even than living on land; it is advanced good news of a coming society in which the spirit of man, through sovereign control over its own destiny, may realize the intention of God's sovereignty through the kingdom of God.

Modern homesteading is very different from its early pioneer antecedent which emerged out of the simple necessity to attack nature in the stern demand for survival.

The early homesteaders busied themselves with what A. J. Nock calls the *economic means*. They applied their labor to natural resources and made the wealth so created available to all who shared in its creation. Pioneering meant that every man could be self-employed. It demanded this simple, direct assault upon nature.

By contrast, we are today faced with a complex world of political indirection whose characteristic method Nock calls the *political means*. This he defines as that arrangement of power peculiar to the modern state which legalizes the appropriation, by certain favored groups, of wealth created from natural resources by other peoples' labor. This political means could not keep step in that swift march across the American continent of free spirits seeking dominion in a new world.

The Failure of an Age

God's arrangement for man's dominion over the earth, an arrangement which he ordained at creation, has been set aside as this political instrument has risen in ascendancy over the use of the economic instrument. Shakespeare, with deep insight, defined the politician as "one who would circumvent God." But the vast machine-like structure which we call modern industrialism finds that it cannot circumvent God eternally. It no longer functions well; indeed, it is falling apart. The growing maladjustment inherent in this industrial society can be seen chiefly in two failures starkly revealed by this crisis.

The foundation of the age, in its material conquest, is itself crumbling. The complex machine set up to meet human needs and desires with the characteristic indirection of a political instrument no longer works. Which is it really designed to do; to satisfy human desires or to thwart them on behalf of interests? The fact that the question can be seriously considered reveals a strange inner inconsistency.

During the last great world depression, the United States had present, in abundance, all the factors necessary for a perfect economy under our system—except the one for which the system was not designed—the sincere intention to share the wealth. There was accumulated capital which could not find outlet; there were idle machines everywhere; there was

Life on the Land

By RALPH TEMPLIN

human labor desperate for a chance but rotting from well-intentioned benevolence; there were material resources for production going to waste or destroyed to produce scarcity; and there were millions of people in need, many of them homeless and hungry, who could have furnished a market for all the goods that could have been produced. Yet this machine stalled; and it never fully recovered under conditions of peace. The political instrument has run afoul of its own complexity and indirection, in a world designed for simplicity and directness.

The second evidence of failure is the fact that the spirit of this age has now forsaken it. Democratic liberalism has all along borne up this rationalistic and materialistic age and given it hope. We can see its flight in the retreat of modern man from freedom to a security bought at the price of his freedom by his surrender of control to political leaders who promise him most.

Such is the world out of which modern homesteading and decentralization as a philosophy emerge, with justification and urgency perhaps never known before. Can our world be recalled from this confusion and chaos into certainty and a sane order? Does the Christian have an answer, and if so where? What significance for Christianity is in this new modern trend to live on the land?

We will be helped in our answers by an understanding of certain important implications of the Christian philosophy for rural living. Let us begin by assuming as demonstrated facts that a homesteader's life does not involve farming (the business of raising food for markets) or a return to simple standards and methods of living. It does not need to involve isolation or the surrender of any of the genuine cultural values which cities have afforded. I am, therefore, referring to the Christian philosophy at points where it concerns every living person, or city or country.

Sovereignty: Human and Divine

I like to call the great Christian imperative *the extension of man's spirit. The sabbath was made for man.* The human person subservient to the works of his hand, to his machines, to his institutions, even to his church, is something less than a Christian person. He was created to be sovereign. Because he partakes of the likeness of God, his eternal destiny is to assume control of nature and of himself. Only so does he remain godlike.

But this sovereignty of personality has two sides. It is *personal,* the assertion of independence, of supremacy. It has its seat in the rugged integrity of unshakable conscience, where the individual stands alone before God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." All freedom begins in this conscientious assertion. But personality has to *extend* itself. Without that extension by control over nature, over human nature—to subdue the world both inner and outer—there is no sovereignty. Without this extension of sovereign personal control, life's freedom and life's spirituality remain illusory. *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

But man alone cannot extend his sovereignty. By one act in which he identifies himself with both God and his fellowmen, he extends his own sovereignty and at the same time fulfills God's intention of divine familyhood. His sovereignty is therefore God's sovereignty. It begins within, but it extends until it is universal, as God is universal.

It is thus that God's justice will roll onward to the ends of the earth. I doubt that world brotherhood and world peace can ever be attained except on the basis of this realization that God's sovereignty begins where we are, in the inner integrity of consecrated spirit. From there it asserts the divine-human supremacy which I have called personal sovereignty over all the works of God's hands and over all human arrangements. This is the indomitable personal power which Gandhi calls *Satyagraha* or soul-force. It takes us through family to neighborhood, through neighborhood to society, and through society to world community. This seems to me inescapable for the Christian.

It becomes, therefore, our Christian mission as we confront this age to take back one by one every item of control over our economic destiny which we have surrendered to others and by which we have already been rendered servile and exploitable. This means democratizing economics. The Christian way is to begin at once where we are. It means to restore the economic means to American life. There are two ways.

By turning directly to the land and learning to use it in the most skillful modern ways, we can make the most direct application possible of the economic means. The self-service involved in homesteading is more significant than we have thought. Because it is the least indirect of all

Toward a Sane Life on the Land

economic acts, it is inevitably the most lucrative. The twelve research bulletins of the School of Living reduce twelve homesteading activities to their value in earnings per hour for the time spent. Homesteading under modern conditions pays well.

Electrical equipment and other machinery and tools not only improve the quality of workmanship, but they also reduce the time of the process. For example, your time is worth more when you grind wheat with an electric mill, after making all due charges against the process such as electric current, amortization, rent, and so forth, than it is worth when you laboriously grind the same amount of flour with a hand mill. You can no more afford to be backward in your home than you can to be backward in a factory. At the School of Living, with a family averaging eight people, we took from our four acres in one year more than a thousand dollars worth of food that we supplied to our table, or sold without effort as excess, in spite of the fact that we had to buy all of the feed for our animals. Besides, we had built up, in five years, completely worn-out land.

The second way of restoring the economic means to American life goes beyond that natural limit set for a family. Voluntary association through consumer co-operation furnishes the means for a group self-service which can provide for a fuller extension of human sovereignty. Beyond neighborhood co-operatives, which so far have only scratched the surface of the possibility in the integral approach, there is possible the extension of co-operation and its application to the basic human problem of integrated living.

Kagawa believes that co-operatives can bring world peace. Certainly it is only by living together in a common purpose that a world community can be built. John Dewey says that most of what people say and do about international good will, world order, and universal brotherhood remains meaningless because it does not lay hold of the problems where men live. Neighborhood is the prime community. Co-operatives can subdue the world only as they invest sovereignty in the common man.

The economic answer of the Christian philosophy is important because the crisis of our age is peculiarly an economic crisis. But the importance of decentralization goes far beyond material considerations. We ought not to overlook the fact that even the economic consideration which we have considered has a deeply spiritual significance. It is because man does *not* live by bread alone that he cannot allow himself to be fed by those who exploit him. The highest destiny in economics does in itself constitute fulfillment of *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

How can the family best contribute to the realization of a Christian society? How the community? If Christianity is unique—as I believe it is—only in that it proceeds by a spiritualization of life itself, how can it as a faith be implemented? If a minister wants his ministry to be spiritual in this deepest sense, then the sharing with his people of all the practical problems of living becomes an important part of his ministry. The teaching side of his ministry might best be known as a "school of living." How much does Christianity have to say about living? This much I know: If it is stratosphere religion, it is not of Christ.

Through a school of living in his parish, in which the reality of his own Christianity is a most potent example, the modern minister has a unique opportunity of being about the Father's business. When God said to man, *Fill the earth and subdue it,* he meant what he said. The conquest of nature and of human nature was the first divine-human concern. Our age has failed at both. It is when man is not the master over his science, his industry, and his government that materialism reigns.

TWO-MINUTE SKETCHES *FROM THE AMEN CORNER*

This is a Pulpit Beater. He must be mad with his wife, and taking it out on that little pulpit that can't hit back. But he'd be helpless if it wasn't there. Once he tried to make a talk at the High School and couldn't, because he didn't have it to pound on.

Did your congregation hear a Pulpit Beater last Sunday?

LITURGY

2. The secretary of the Methodist Church's Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship describes the pattern of the orders of worship in *The Book of Worship for Church and Home*. His third article on this book will follow in January.

The Book of Worship

By OSCAR THOMAS OLSON

THE BOOK of Worship for Church and Home, as its title indicates, is designed for public worship in the sanctuary and for private devotion in the home. The first half of *The Book of Worship* is taken up in presenting Orders of Worship and Aids in the Ordering of Worship.

An order of worship is not an accidental or miscellaneous collection of hymns, readings and prayers. An order of worship seeks to make real the overture of God to man and man's response to the eternal. It should be marked with sincerity and simplicity. The orders of worship all follow a general pattern. There is usually a fourfold aspect to this pattern—adoration, confession, affirmation, and dedication. Man adores, God reveals; man confesses, God pardons; man affirms, God illumines; man dedicates, God empowers.

A service of worship should never be a stereotyped thing. It should put habit on the side of faith. It should give real opportunity for free and spontaneous action. It should not be a monopoly for the minister. It should give the people—all the people—a real chance to share and participate.

In a service of worship in an evangelical church, a free Church of the Spirit, the service belongs quite as much to the man in the pew as to the minister in the pulpit. No sacerdotal privilege inheres in the person in the pulpit. Here a fellowship of believers shares the sacramental life. This sharing of life finds itself in enlisting under the command of the best and noblest and highest that the combined insights of the worshipers may apprehend. Worship is the lifting of our lives, together, into unison with God.

What the worshiper carries away from the sanctuary depends very much on what he brings with him and how he shares in the energies of the spiritual world that are made available to him. Personal dividends from a corporate venture presuppose personal investment. A student in college derives little or nothing by attendance in a class in which he assumes that the teacher is going to do all the work. An education cannot be obtained by merely basking in the atmosphere of a college or university. When at the close of a service of worship a person tells the minister that the service was enjoyable, the minister has a right to wonder just what was meant. Was the enjoyment something that came to him while he was simply maintaining the attitude toward the preaching, the praying, and the singing—all of them sacraments of God—that the theater-goes maintains toward the action of the stage? Was the enjoyment something that came to him as he threw himself into the corporate worship and shared its meaning and purpose and consecration, or did he only quietly let himself be played upon by it as one lies under the sunshine in order to be warmed by it, or as the plant passively submits itself to be saturated by the rain?

Public worship is not a season of enjoyable spiritual entertainment. Public worship is the lifting of our lives, together, into unison with God, into unison with one another in the mighty human drama that actually brings the divine on to the stage of life. Public worship signifies that we give ourselves to God and to each other. It is the essential outward sign of an inner fellowship.

There are eleven orders of worship for general use and fifteen orders of worship for occasional use in *The Book of Worship*. Christmas, Watch-Night, Easter and the other festival occasions are recognized. One hundred and forty pages of material are provided as aids in the ordering of worship. Here may be found prayers of confession, words of assurance, prayers for pardon, and many other special acts of worship such as intercessions, liturgies, etc. The Christian Year is recognized with scripture sentences, calls to worship, and prayers for all the seasons of the soul. The riches of the devotional literature of the world have been drawn upon to make this a useful and creative book for Methodists in their practice of worship.

Worship is not a luxury for an occasional use. It is the giving of worth to that which matters most to us. The real question is where we place the main emphasis of life. Our contemporary secular living puts man at the center of all things. It asks respectable decency and affirms that if men are given the necessary opportunities of education and culture they will build a satisfactory habitation for the human spirit. We have sung the theme song of human progress for more than three generations of the modern scene. But the sons of Greece have failed to build a new Jerusalem. Human nature needs the redemptive act of the divine power. The true center of human life is God—not man.

Worship grows out of a sense of man's dependence on God. Apart from Him we are nothing. "All that I am or have is Thine." Worship is an act of the whole personality. Every part of us belongs to God—not some small part that we may select as a spiritual gratuity out of a selfish life.

The Book of Worship has come out of the felt and known desire of the Church for a more adequate guidance and direction in the art of worship. The General Conference of The Methodist Church has authorized its publication for optional use. Here is a new resource put into the hands of ministers and laymen to help in the Crusade for Christ as men receive an invitation to Christian discipleship.

"WHAT WE NEED MORE OF . . ."

HERBERT S. McCONNELL • *Delrose Tenn.*

That little article by Roger Ortmayer on "What We Need More Of—Less Organization!" [Sept.], is a fine expression. That is just what people over Methodism are saying right now—specially those of us in the smaller churches. Like Roger, I'm afraid we've become too 'organizational-minded.' This is particularly noticeable at a Fourth Quarterly Conference in a small church or charge. The reading of those several names over and over again for more than one committee or board or what-not!

IN DEFENSE OF ORTMAYER

C. L. MOORE • *Ford City, Penna.*

I hope I am not too late to say a word in defense of Pastor Ortmayer. If sentence has been pronounced, and he has already been shot, I shall never forgive myself. I know that my word would have little weight with the bigwigs, the bureaucrats, and the brass hats of the Methodist Church, but I do want to say a word in his defense.

Pastor Ortmayer is a brave man. I wish that his words might be shouted from the housetops. We Methodists believe in the power of organization. If we only can have enough organization, we can save the world, or so we fondly think. I can't find that in the Holy Bible, but a study of the Methodist Bible, *The Discipline,* would leave us under that impression.

I fondly join with Pastor Ortmayer in wishing that a lot of those men in "detached" service, who are telling the rest of us how to do it, would get out and *do it* instead of trying to tell the rest of us how. Sometimes I feel like saying, "A plague on all your literature." I spend so much of my time filing away the efforts of these men to tell me how to do it. If I just had the nerve to throw it in the wastebasket in the first place, I believe that I would be better off.

If the average preacher today is confused, it is no wonder. He has so many people trying to tell him what to do, so many programs thrust upon him, so many voices telling him to do this, do that, or do the other thing. There are so many messiahs saying, "Lo, here, or lo, there, is the way to the promised land."

Sometimes I wonder if it wouldn't be better if we had a little less program, and a little more prayer. Does God really speak to us? If God does talk to us, wouldn't it be a good thing to find out what He would have us to do?

Are we substituting organization for spiritual power?

"THE CHRISTIAN YEAR"

E. M. CONOVER • *New York City*

I have read with great appreciation [the] article on "The Christian Year" in the September issue.

I am sure it will be very greatly appreciated by an increasing number of Methodist pastors, who are realizing the need of leadership in the field of worship, because increasingly our people want more meaningfulness and reality in worship.

CONCERNING LITURGICS

WM. ESLER SLOCUM • *Eldred, Penna.*

You may be interested in learning that some of your articles on liturgics "sold" THE PASTOR to me. I feel that, as suggested by Mr. Marshall in his recent article, there is a real need for our ministers to return to Wesley in the matter of worship. His article on Wesley [July] and the one on the Christian Year [Sept.] should be required reading for every Methodist pastor.

For some time I have had some questions I would like to have considered by someone who understands the subject, but until now I have not known where to ask them. Perhaps Mr. Marshall can answer some of them in a future article.

1. Why does our ritual contain so little instruction as to the conduct of its services? Would it not help if, like the *Book of Common Prayer,* it should contain a few rubrics? Why not include the instruction on "How to Conduct Our Ritual" which used to be printed in the loose leaf ritual, etc.? Nothing would do more to restore the Sacrament to its rightful place than the careful following, "In the conduct of the Communion, place the bread in the open palm of the hand. Take the cup from the tray, and place in the hand." The people will respond. On my last three charges, additional communion glasses have been purchased because more people have received the Sacrament at one service than the church was equipped to take care of. I use the ritual, making no charges except to insert a Gradual between the Epistle and the Gospel so as to have the congregation on their feet for the Gospel and the Creed.

The carelessness of many of our ministers reveals a tragic need for instruction. Some time ago I attended a service in which the celebrant stood with his back to the Table for his prayer of consecration. At another time I attended a service in one of our larger churches where a fine communion set was misused by using the trays for the collecting of used glasses, while the people helped themselves from glasses placed on the rail. In our churches, it is nothing unusual for extra wine to be brought in and used without consecration, and it is not unusual for the Consecrated Elements to be disposed of in anything but a reverent manner.

2. Why do we have to have a Methodist version of the Creed and of many of the ancient prayers of the Church? Our editing has not been an improvement in any case. It has only succeeded in making any guests we may have feel ill at ease. Is it beneath the dignity of Methodists to acknowledge that they are "miserable offenders?" Is there anything more absurd than a Methodist Apostles' Creed? I open every new copy of a service in fear and trembling for fear that I may find a new version of the Lord's Prayer.

3. In the article on the Church Year, mention is made of the minister's stole. Just how does a Methodist minister wear one? Should we use the full Anglican vestments or should we wear it with the black robe which seems to be the standard Methodist vestment? I wear the black robe, but I cannot say that I like it. However, as worn by my district superintendent and most of the men in this section, the use of the clerical collar makes it look a little less collegiate. Could we not have vestments designed for Methodists which are historically correct without being a copy of those worn by some other denomination—vestments which will point to a minister's ordination rather than to his scholastic achievements?

TO THE "MOTHER CHURCH"

ALEXANDER H. CLATTENBURG • *Trinity Assembly of God, Baltimore, Md.*

I take THE PASTOR, and I think you have done an outstanding job. The cover, the different departments, and book reviews are excellent.

I read with amusement and wonder your articles on the "sects" so-called. I have just returned from our 21st biennial conference held in Springfield, Mo., and I thought you might put these facts in THE PASTOR:

The Assemblies of God General Council just closed their 21st biennial conference. It was one of the most historic since its inception in 1914.

The highlights were: the election of four general assistant superintendents; provision for the erection of a new modern publishing house to be air conditioned, etc., the cost of which is $1,500,000; purchase of the ball park in Springfield for $35,000; provision for a national radio hour over the ABC Network. We now have 539 missionaries, which is more than the Southern Baptist have and the goal is 1,000 and an offering of $5,000,000.

Our membership is close to 250,000 and the *Pentecostal Evangel*, our official organ, has reached an all-time circulation high for a weekly religious magazine—116,000 copies a week.

How is this being done? We believe in Methodism, and it works for us. We don't have any suppers, bingo, strawberry festivals and what have you. We pray hours at a time, like Wesley and his followers. We have the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the spirit of giving. I daresay that more than fifty per cent of our church members are former Methodists.

We are now laying plans for a Junior College at Springfield, Mo. We have many schools over the country; some that issue the college degree.

We are humble in this matter and give God the glory for what has been done.

We started small and today have some of the finest churches in the land. We are building a new church here in Baltimore which will cost around $50,000. It will be a Colonial brick.

May God help us all to preach the truth. We thank God for our mother church, if we might call Methodism that, and much of our inspiration has come from those saints of your church who fought, bled and died for the truths we now hold dear in the Assemblies of God.

THE PASTOR: WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH

DON R. YOCOM • *Westminster, Md.*

May I make some observations concerning THE PASTOR?

I have been a subscriber for about half a year and have some criticisms both in favor of and against the present format of this paper.

First of all, it is claimed to be a paper devoted to the minister's workshop. Yet the magazine is much more like a popular paper than it is a *minister's* paper. The articles given all can be poured into one rut theologically and academically. They seem to be thought provoking but *so often* are not practical, especially to the minister of small churches (100 members or less) and the rural churches. Why not an article by a conservative theologian once in a while? Or does one have to be on the "staff" to write for THE PASTOR?

Second, the paper is devoid of ministerial helps such as sermon notes, outlines, and illustrations, except for the one section called "The Fountain." There have been no Bible study articles that I can remember. Everything seems to be "life-centered" rather than "Christ-centered." Third, why not a "safety-valve" for readers like myself to spout off in? A reader's column might be a valuable addition. There was one for awhile.

Fourth, THE PASTOR has certain good qualities also. I like the size of the paper, and the number of pages is not skimped, as is often true of similar periodicals.

Fifth, the book reviews are always good and save a minister money by helping him choose books wisely.

Sixth, the editorials have been thought-provoking.

Seventh, the sermons given have been very good, though a sermon by some great preacher in the past might help to keep variety in this section of the paper.

I have enjoyed the paper, though I have felt it was being hampered by certain policies which caused the above weaknesses.

"LIBERTY OF THOUGHT . . ."

PAUL E. ERTEL • *Cincinnati, Ohio*

It is a real pleasure to read THE PASTOR from month to month, due to the fact that it is unique among all publications which come from the Methodist presses. It is one paper which permits independent thinking, and therefore carries a large percentage of stimulating articles.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FLORENCE RESOR JARDINE • *Weston, Ore.*

Let me congratulate you on the splendid editorial, "Two Cities: the Time for Decision," in the recent [Oct.] issue of THE PASTOR. In one page you gave us food for thought for a dozen sermons.

ON THE NATURE OF MAN

WALTER L. SCRANTON • *White Plains, N. Y.*

The editorial appearing in the July number of THE PASTOR, entitled "Atrocities and the Romantic View of Man," in my judgment is a masterpiece of analysis.

There is nothing needed more in the Christian Church today than an adequate perspective and a firm grasp of the cardinal, Christian truths dealing with the redemption of man. I think that we must ever be on our guard againts superficiality and irrelevancy. We simply must as a Church speak to the depth of human need, which I think can never be postulated on any other basis than what you suggest.

NEW COVER DESIGNS

GORDON PRATT BAKER • *Baltimore, Md.*

Permit me to express my pleasure at seeing the new series of cover designs for THE PASTOR. They are both distinctive and attractive. . . . I feel that this is particularly true of the September number with its decided change of format.

Clinical Material

Writing to the editor, a pastor describes here the story of a routine call, during which he sought to bring the help of religion to a parishioner, whose main problem took the form of guilt and loneliness. Note the use of the alphabetical "keys" in the story of the call upon the pseudonymous Mrs. Naomi Clark and also in the editor's comments and evaluations of the call which follow Pastor Smith's own evaluation of his efforts.

Preliminary Description: During the interim while St. John's Evangelical Church is securing a minister, I have been asked to call upon the parishioners. Not knowing which members were active and which not, I have followed the church roll, calling upon each person as listed.

This call was made upon a parishioner whose home is above a store on a busy "car-line" street. I rang Mrs. Clark's bell and she answered down the speaking tube. I introduced myself, was admitted and Mrs. Clark greeted me cordially at the top of the stairs. We entered the dining room. It was well lighted and from its contrast to the parlor, I gathered that Mrs. Clark reserved the front room for special occasions. She showed me into the front room and turned on the lights.

Seating herself opposite me, Mrs. Clark paused for me to speak. A good-looking grey-haired woman of sixty-five, she was dressed in a neat but inexpensive house dress. During the call she apologized several times for the state of the house, and as she moved about the room she invariably found some item of furnishing out of place and rearranged it slightly.

"Mrs. Clark, I'm the assistant minister at St. John's during this interim period when the church is without a regular pastor, and I have been calling on all the members of the church to get acquainted."

"That's very nice. Our former preacher, Mr. Town, never was much of a hand for calling. At least he never got around to see me. He didn't seem to like to call."

(a) "I'm afraid I'm blessed with a liking to talk to people.

"That's the way it should be. Ever since my husband died, I've been more or less alone here in this house."

(b) "Have you lived here long?"

"Almost thirty years. My son, Fred, was brought up here." At this she moved across the room and showed me a picture of her son, a well-dressed man of early middle-age.

(c) "I can imagine that this part of the city has changed quite a bit in those years, hasn't it?"

(d) "Yes. My son has been urging me to get rid of this building and move away, but my husband was buried from this room and I don't want to leave." This reference to her husband was said with considerable feeling. Her eyes had a hint of tears in them. She concluded, rather angrily, "When my husband was alive we had a grocery downstairs. There were no taverns with neon signs in every building then. That's why I don't go to church anymore."

When she finished this she was obviously weeping.

(e) I paused a moment, then asked, "What's happened, Mrs. Clark?"

There was a long pause, during which she wiped her eyes with a handkerchief and rearranged the pins in a lace "doilie" on the davenport. "Protestants didn't marry Catholics then," said she.

(f) "When did that happen?"

"You saw what was downstairs in my building when you came up."

"I'm afraid I didn't notice."

"Well, when they moved from the corner about five years ago this September they moved in here with their saloon. I wouldn't have allowed it, except that I was behind with my taxes and had to have the money. They run a respectable place, though, and I make them bring the rent upstairs. I won't go in the place."

(g) "That was a difficult decision to make. But you said something about Catholics and Protestants?"

"Yes. My son (you saw his picture) is divorced."

"Is your son a Catholic?"

"It was all a one-sided affair. She didn't love him and he said to me he'd do anything to keep together for their daughter's sake. But she wouldn't hear of it, so they were divorced three years ago. He's been living here ever since and now he's going to marry again."

(h) "He's going to marry a Catholic?"

"That's right. She's a nice girl." Again Mrs. Clark broke into tears. Wiping her eyes she moved across the room again, and picking up a picture from the bookcase, she said "This is my granddaughter's picture."

"She's a nice-looking girl."

"She comes in to see me quite often. Her mother keeps her busy, though." She replaced the picture on the bookcase and sat down again. "I know I shouldn't feel this way, but I do."

"Is it your son's divorce that bothers you?"

"No. That just had to be. She didn't love him. All she wanted to do was to run around and have a good time." This was said with the only bitterness expressed during the entire conversation and was in marked contrast to the general impression of "grey-haired sweetness" which Mrs. Clark gives.

(i) "What about this girl your son

is going to marry,—have you met her?"

"Oh yes. She's a lovely girl. She really loves Fred. She's so nice around the house, too. She always helps me with my housework whenever she comes. I know I shouldn't feel this way, but I guess I'm just unhappy about having to live alone, when my son marries again."

(j) "It does take a lot of courage to live alone. But you were telling me why you don't go to church anymore."

"Well, my husband was a strong Lutheran and didn't have any use for Catholics at all. When he was living . . ." and again, when mentioning her husband, her voice almost broke. "We always went to the Lutheran Church. After his death I began to go to the Evangelical Church."

"It was nice that you could find a church close by that you enjoyed."

"I did, too. I was very active in the Women's Aid. I was president for six years. We did lots of things for the church. My son went to the young people's society when he was younger but he's not much of a church man now. He went away from home, got married, and sort of lost interest in church."

(k) "It sounds as though you found a lot of friends in your church work."

"I did, but there was a grocery store down-stairs then, and I could hold up my head. What do you think, Mr. Smith, about a church member who rents his building to a saloon?"

(l) "I don't suppose many of us particularly enjoy these taverns, but I'd say the really important thing would be how you feel about it."

"It was either that or lose the building, and we worked so hard to pay for it—my husband and I."

"I'll bet you did."

"I would have kept going, I think, because Christ did deal with publicans and sinners, but I just had to stop after my son had his divorce."

(m) "You thought the church people wouldn't approve of divorce?"

"Yes. I knew they'd all be thinking we were regular 'saloon people,' owning this building, having divorces, and now marrying Catholics."

(n) "Do you really think so, Mrs. Clark?"

"Oh there are lots of them who wouldn't. They knew how hard it was with me. The depression, back taxes, and all. But I just couldn't go and put 'booze money' in the collection plate. **(o)** And Rev. Town never did call on me here."

(p) "Mrs. Clark, I really don't think that that was why the Rev. Mr. Town didn't call on you. We ministers are so careless, sometimes. We have to depend a lot on people's forgiveness."

"I suppose he would have come eventually, but you didn't like his coming past a saloon to see you, did you?"

(q) "Well, I wanted to call on you, and although I don't care for saloons one has to walk by them on every street now."

"It's a nice place. I won't stand for a rough place."

(r) "I think that the tragic thing about saloons is not that people drink, but that they have to go into a bar and buy a drink in order to find someone who'll act friendly towards them. There are many people who drink because they're terribly lonely."

(s) "You're right, Reverend. All my son's old friends are married and sometimes he feels very lonely. Then he drinks."

(t) "I'm sure it is. Really, I think that's one of the most important things about the church. In a church you can find friends to work with who understand. Didn't you find it so?"

"Yes, I did. I always enjoyed going and taking part. My husband was a great church man."

(u) "I'm sure he was. You know, Mrs. Clark, I do hope you'll want to start coming to church again. I'm sure that people don't think as harshly of you about where you live as you think."

"And my son really isn't a regular 'saloon type.' "

(v) "Of course he isn't. I think you'll find lots of important things to do in the church, when he's married."

"Yes, but every time they pass the collection, I think about where my money comes from."

(w) "You do have a reminder, don't you? If you really think that way, why don't you remember this: people drink because they need friends, which is just what a good church is trying to provide. So when you remain in the church you're helping to provide a place where people can find those friends. And so your money is never really tainted when it's doing a good work."

"Perhaps, you're right."

(x) "I think I am right about this. Why don't you come back to church Sunday and try it out for a few weeks?"

"Maybe I will."

(y) "I wonder if I've met any of your acquaintances during my calling. Do you know Mrs. Weeks?"

"Oh yes. She's lived here a long time."

"She was just saying the other day how much enjoyment she got out of people from the church calling on her. If you know her well enough I think she'd appreciate a call. She is getting along in years and enjoys visiting with her old friends.

(z) Mrs. Clark and I talked briefly about some of the other older members of the church whom I had met, and after a few short formalities I left.

Pastor's evaluation of the call: Mrs. Clark, widowed during the early days of her marriage has apparently transferred much of her affection for her husband to a building which they bought and paid for. This has been the major source of her income. The raising of an only son and church work have been her principal interest. When that son was married about ten years ago, Mrs. Clark offset her loneliness by active participation in the life of the church. Economic conditions and the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment forced her to rent her store space to a small tavern. She apparently felt some guilt over this action, but for about two years continued her church activities. Three years ago, when her son was divorced, she felt that such action was not completely right. In her situation she regarded it as the result of becoming "saloon people" of loose morals. This divorce precipitated her previously-controlled guilt feelings and she felt it necessary to withdraw from the church. During these last few years she had been occupied with the care of her son who lived with her. Now he is planning to remarry and she faces loneliness again: this time without any group activities to occupy her interest. The traditional Lutheran background of her husband appears to have complicated the situation when it is seen that her son is going to marry a Catholic.

Mrs. Clark's spiritual needs would appear to be:

(1) Dealing with her guilt for renting to a tavern and not saving her son from the pains of divorce and remarriage.

(2) Providing her with an outlet for her guilt feelings (Protestant equivalent of penance?).

(3) Finding for her some circle of fellowship to mitigate her loneliness.

The call was helpful in allowing her to express and consider her own problems. I think that some facts, previously not connected in her thoughts, became properly related after she expressed them. The call was helpful, also, in the fact that a minister would call in spite of the saloon downstairs. Many of the blind alleys of conversation have been forgotten, and are not included in the record. If she does not return to church soon, another call should be made, say within two weeks.

Editor's Comment:

(a) This centers attention upon the pastor and carries away from the implied criticism of the former minister. However, he should remember this comment and come back to it at a later time.

(b) Again, he passed by a significant lead, in her reference to her dead husband, to make a more general inquiry. In the early part of a get-acquainted call this is good proceedure. She will bring him back to whatever subject is important.

(c) He is attempting to direct the conversation to neutral subjects. This is frequently done by parishioners while they are "feeling out" the pastor. In this instance the minister is doing the directing.

(d) Now she interjects her personal feelings strongly. We suspect the more strongly, because he had centered her attention upon impersonal topics while she desired to talk about personal matters. Her desire is readily revealed.

(e) A pause, or a moment of silence, is a pressure method. It should be used with judgment and caution but it is often quite effective in encouraging a parishioner to uncover material which he hesitates to reveal.

Now the minister encourages Mrs. Clark to talk about herself and her feelings which she has been anxious to do. She takes her time; when she speaks it is to make an entirely new reference. Persons seeking pastoral counsel often make what may be called "shock statements." This is what Mrs. Clark has done. It is an effort to gain the minister's full attention and to place herself in a position where there is no turning back.

(f) This is an awkward question. Rather, he might have said simply, "How is that, Mrs. Clark?"

The parishioner continues to speak of the saloon in her building downstairs, which indicates guilt. Once such a feeling is revealed it is important for the pastor to give the parishioner opportunity to talk about her feelings and disappointments. In this way she may gain relief she desires from her feelings and make some new decision.

(g) The pastor gives encouragement by calling her attention to an earlier statement. This is directive listening, and I would criticize him for using it at this point. He should have been more passive and so give the parishioner the chance to carry him on to her spiritual need. However, Mrs. Clark is under such stress that whichever way he turns more of her problem is revealed. Now it is a question of divorce. In the later part of her statement where she refers to her son's re-marriage another point is revealed.

(h) The pastor fails to understand the "Catholic" reference. He fails to suspect that it is the re-marriage of her son, and not who he is marrying, that is important. Her earlier "shock statement" is what probably caused him to overlook this fact.

(i) Again, the pastor is strongly directive. A good healthy pause here would have let her carry the conversation in the direction it needed to go. As it was, more feelings were revealed and the future daughter-in-law, the Catholic girl, is cleared of blame.

(j) Still stronger direction is used by the pastor and still stronger criticism has to be made of him for it. He centers his attention upon the church and not the parishioner. This is a mistake that is commonly made.

(k) Not much point to this remark, and because it is so pointless more guilt feelings are revealed.

(l) This is well handled. It is not what he thinks but what she thinks that is important. I have critized him above, but I commend him here.

(m) Good question aimed at clarity.

(n) This kind of question tends to give the impression of belittling the feelings of the parishioner. Therefore it should not have been used.

(o). Here we see an interesting point. There were growing guilt feelings on the part of the parishioner. Her pastor did not call, so her feelings were increased by his oversight. It is probably true that the greatest harm we do as pastors is in failing to make pastoral calls.

(p) The pastor becomes defensive instead of using the reference to discover more about her feelings. He could have said, "Mrs. Clark, did you think that that was why Mr. Town didn't call?"

(q) This was a good answer in that it carried an overtone of encouragement, and told Mrs. Clark that she was more important than the saloon in her building. Her answer indicates that she now begins to build up her "sense of dignity," which is necessary if she is to do anything constructive with her life.

(r) His next statement is an effort to support this desire. It would be called reassurance, which is Protestant absolution.

(s) Her ready acceptance of the reasurance would indicate that the confession was complete, at least it is satisfactory for the present. She has talked as much as she wants to.

(t) Further reassurance.

(u) More reassurance, this time directed toward the church.

(v) Further reassurance.

(w) This may have been desirable, but my impression is that it was overdone. She still has the saloon, and her son is still going to marry, and returning to church is not going to change either fact. I would not have tried to relieve her feelings on the saloon situation because that is false reassurance and ultimately will do harm. She must make some decision about her building, but she cannot do it today.

(x) No; too strong.

(y) This could have waited for another call. It is important not to attempt to do too much in one call.

(z) The call should have closed with a prayer. Wherever there is confession, prayer is indicated.

Editor's Evaluation of Call:

Here we see an interesting call where the spiritual need is great. The parishioner desperately needed pastoral attention but she could not bring herself to seek it because the former minister's failure to call was a contributing factor in her guilt feelings.

The minister's method in the call fluctuated between being poor and excellent. In general he was using the listening method, which enabled him to avoid the more common mistake in pastoral calling, that of over-talking. At times the call was strongly church-centered rather than parishioner-centered, which lead to some mistakes.

The immediate problem was a feeling of guilt which was relieved temporarily, but not permanently. The ultimate problem is loneliness, which must still be dealt with. The pastor was moving in the right direction when he sought to bring the parishioner back into the church fellowship. This was too much to accomplish in one call. More work is indicated. The call was helpful.—**R. L. D.**

Questions of the Month:

What are the major techniques of the Protestant minister for pastoral work?
How important is the factor of goodwill in pastoral work?
What is the place of calling upon non-church members in the field of pastoral work?

Techniques: The major techniques of the Protestant minister for pastoral work are listening, prayer and communion. As I have described the listening method, it has four parts: passive listening, directive listening, interpretation, and reassurance.

(a) Passive listening is characterized by the pastor being passive as the parishioner talks, interjecting "yeses," "unhuhs" and "I understands" as the story unfolds. It is used when the parishioner is under considerable emotional stress and is talking freely, not waiting for reply.

(b) Directive listening is characterized by the pastor's use of questions, thus causing the parishioner to talk about what the minister feels he should talk about. It may be a dangerous method when used unwisely. Its use should be carefully studied and it should be used cautiously at first.

(c) Interpretation falls under the listening method because it is used only after the pastor has listened to the parishioner's story. It is characterized by the minister explaining and describing to the parishioner what lies behind his trouble. It is a short cut method and one that may do considerable damage. The traditional practice of advice-giving is close to this method.

(d) Reassurance, carelessly called assurance by some, is the pastor's positive statement after he has listened to the parishioner's story. Most pastors use it too early in a pastoral call and too frequently, thus limiting its effectiveness. It should not be confused with a statement of encouragement which may be used early in a pastoral conference. We are not just certain as to the importance of this phase of the listening ministry, but we believe it may be discovered to be significant.

Goodwill: This is perhaps the most important single factor in pastoral work. In counseling and psychiatric literature this feeling is called *rapport*. Rapport, by definition, means trust, confidence, friendliness, goodwill, affection, love.

One cannot do effective pastoral work without this feeling of friendliness and affection being present. It may not be present in any great degree at the outset of a given pastoral call, but it builds up over a period of time. It grows out of the need and desires for affection on the part of both parishioner and pastor.

If you have a parishioner who dislikes you, you cannot help him.

Rapport may be established through *routine calling*. Ministry to the sick, the dying, the bereaved, begins in the *routine call*, long before

the illness or the bereavement takes place. As a pastor your ministry, your rapport, is affected by what a given parishioner thought of your predecessor. If he was fond of his former pastor, he is likely to be fond of you. If he disliked your predecessor, he will be suspicious of you.

Non-members: Evangelistic calling has a significant place in the pastoral ministry. I am sure I have not given it the recognition nor the description it deserves because I have been so concerned with the limitation of the average minister's work in his care of people in the crises of death, illness and bereavement.

Evangelistic calling is any call upon a non-church member, even though this call is made upon a sick or bereaved person, and even though no specific word is said by the minister about Christ or his Church.

Most evangelistic calling fails if the subject of commitment is broached too soon. The individual must have a feeling that Christ and the church fellowship is interested in him. Can he know that Christ is interested in him except as that interest is expressed by those who serve the Church? He can if he reads his Bible, but few come to church through first having read the Bible.

THE PASTOR *would like to publish a series of evangelistic calls if our readers will send them to us. They should be recorded in verbatim form similar to the calls we have been published under "Clinical Material."*

Include an introductory paragraph describing the circumstances of your call and what your previous contacts with the prospect have been. Then record the call itself, and close with a summary estimate of the call and what you think of its effectiveness.

I will examine the call, as I have the calls we have published, and give my evaluation of it. In that way we will help ourselves, and others, in understanding this vital task. Do not hesitate to describe calls which you consider failures.—**R. L. D.**

The Shepherd's Heart

By Marvin A. Franklin

The pastor of Highlands Methodist Church, Birmingham, Ala., discusses some opportunities and techniques of the pastoral task today. Effectiveness in this task, he says, depends upon our having the pastoral heart—courageous, radiant, loving.

THE highest and holiest task ever committed to mortal hands is that of being a pastor. It is an awesome responsibility but offers unparalleled opportunities. No man can take it lightly and live. To be a prince in the pulpit is beyond most of us; but to be a faithful shepherd of the flock of Christ is possible for all of us.

Every pastor, standing at the bar of his conference, solemnly promises that he will visit from house to house. Pastoral visiting should always have point and purpose and never be haphazard and aimless. To make calls just to see how many we can make is to miss the mark. Each visit should have something of the message of the Kingdom of God in it. It is more than a social call; consequently the conversation should be more than idle chit-chat. The visit should carry spiritual significance and it can do this without the pastor being too somber or preaching a sermon.

There are occasions when the reading of the Bible and prayer are not called for, but in these times of tense anxiety, it is good to offer a prayer, remembering by name the boys of the home who are in the armed forces. The discerning pastor will know when to pray.

Probably in no place does pastoral visiting pay richer dividends than in the city parish where people are so easily submerged in the crowd. The modern pastor needs release from enough of his administrative routine to enable him to be a genuine shepherd. In any church it would be well for the pastor to have a select band of helpers, so he can divide the membership into small groups after the order of the traditional Methodist "class," with a leader in charge keeping in constant touch with them and advising the pastor of all who may need his personal attention.

Someone asked Dr. S. Parkes Cadman how a pastor should visit the sick, and like a flash came his reply: "As quietly as possible," and I would add to that, as quickly as possible. Let the visit be cheerful and bright. Do not seem to be in a hurry. If you stay only a minute let your attitude be such that it would appear that this visit is all you have on your calendar for the day. Never be excited in the sick room nor show surprise or alarm because the patient seems more ill than you expected. It is never wise to open the visit with clouded eyes and wrinkled brow and ask in deep and solemn tones, "My brother, are you prepared to meet your God?" —although the pastor must often help prepare the patient in heart and mind for death. Frequently other members of the family need the pastoral ministry more than the patient. The visit should always be stimulating to the sick and helpful to all the family.

A great hour in the pastor's life is when he is called to the house of mourning. Let him forever remember that he represents the One who said, *I am the Resurrection and the Life.* His visit should be quiet and subdued but always with the undercurrent of victory. There should be no hint of professionalism and not too much conversation or philosophizing. Let there be no false show of sympathy.

It is our holy privilege to get over to the sorrowing family that in Christ we never lose our loved ones. They continue to live in a thousand deathless memories and, by faith and hope

and love, we are able to leap across the forbidding barriers of the grave.

After the service it is well to go back to the home and help the family absorb the inevitable shock. Sometimes it is well to go immediately to the house and be there when the family returns. Then let us stay with the family in counsel and visitation, calling week by week, until they take up again the thread of life and swing back into their places of activity and responsibility in the church and in the community.

We have no formal confessional in the evangelical churches. But again and again the pastor is sought out for counseling by confused and troubled people. This is an increasingly fertile field of service. Let us be sure we can be trusted with the deepest secrets, keeping all confidences inviolate.

The pastor can learn how to counsel without assuming the role of a psychiatrist, which is a field that requires specialized training. In fact the pastor must counsel with his people whether he wishes to or not. So often a person who counsels with the pastor merely wishes approval upon a course already decided. There is a special art in learning to disagree in such cases without being abrupt, and then leading the person to see his problem in its true perspective.

A time-honored responsibility of the pastor is the religious instruction of the children. Learn their names. Few things please a child (or an adult) more than for the pastor to know him and call him by name. Let the pastoral instruction of children include classes being trained for church membership, but let it be much more than that. A very good plan is to take at least one department in the church school, and for several Sundays in the spring and again in the fall, speak to them on the meaning of the Christian life and the steps they must take to enter it.

Building bridges between individuals and groups is one of our most important tasks, however difficult it may be. Something happens to an individual. His feelings are hurt and he quits. It requires as much skill to restore broken relationships in our parish as it does for the physician to set a broken bone.

The field of pastoral ethics is very important. Each pastor has both a predecessor and a successor. It is unfortunate if he is sensitive about either. For a long time he will frequently hear words of appreciation about his predecessor and sometimes be called by his name. If he has neither love nor respect for his predecessor, it is wise to hold his peace, but far better if he can add his own words of appreciation when his name is spoken.

Then we owe it to our successor to open wide the gates for his coming. Of course, we may wonder how he will be able to do the job, but, if we look back, we shall be forced to admit that somehow other churches survived the shock of our removal very well. We are sometimes invited to return to a former church to hold a service or a revival. It would hardly be proper to pray on such an occasion, "O Lord, send again thy mighty power upon this people and help them again to have great vision and do exploits even as they did when thy humble servant was pastor in this place." It is fitting, too, that we never forget that each one of us is always a predecessor or a successor and to apply the Golden Rule.

The church's boundary lines in a city cannot be strictly determined. Our pastoral charges are interlocking. There will be a continuous interchange of members. This situation calls for the greatest care and for a vision of the Kingdom much larger than our own church. It is open to question if the Kingdom is built if our own church grows by weakening another.

On Sunday after the service it is never advisable for the pastor to beat a hasty retreat to his study immediately upon pronouncing the benediction. Some pastors make their way to the vestibule and greet the congregation departing from the service. Others remain in the chancel and speak to those who come forward. This "after service" affords many opportunities for helpfulness. We should always give undivided attention to the one to whom we are presently speaking, not ever absently speaking to one as we look to the next in line.

The pastoral heart is all important. If one despises pastoral work he will never become a great shepherd. At the worst he could be nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing, although his conduct may be above reproach.

The pastoral heart is radiant. The Christian minister represents Him who is the light of the world, the Dayspring from on high. To be sad, depressed, and appear defeated as we go about our glorious task is another and fatal way to betray our Lord and defeat his purposes in the lives of men. The healing shadow of Peter fell upon the beggar at the beautiful gate of the temple; Phillips Brooks walked down newspaper row and the darkness of the morning was turned into the brightness of the noonday. The good pastor is a dispenser of cheer, a bestower of happiness, a giver of life and light. Let him abide in the Holy Presence until the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness suffuses his heart and then let him go forth to reflect that radiance.

The pastoral heart is one of love. No man can be much of a pastor until he loves much. If he loves his people they will trust him and follow him. Love cannot be simulated. The flaw of insincerity is quickly detected by the discerning. False piety is fatal. But a pastor who loves his people and serves them by day and by night, will be to them like an anchor in the storm.

Let us remember that more people are won to Christ through personal efforts than by the sermons we preach. When such words as pope and potentate, preacher and priest, prince and prelate are long forgotten, the word shepherd will abide with blessed meaning for the hearts of men.

Books

Where People Seek Help

WHERE DO PEOPLE TAKE THEIR TROUBLES? *By Lee R. Steiner, Houghton Mifflin Company, 264 pp., $3.*

When the author of this book was a psychiatric social work student she asked her instructor, "Where do people who aren't poor take their personal problems?" Because no one could answer the question the author set out to answer it.

The search lead her into strange places and caused her to meet many strange people. At first she carried on her research into the kind of trouble people have for which they seek help. This she did by listing herself in the Chicago telephone directory as a consultant upon personal problems. Later she transferred her field of investigation to New York City, where she sought "help" from various sources with her own "troubles."

The book is the result of careful and extensive investigation into the practices of those who attempt to help other people upon a fee basis. As an examination into the cults and the activities of the quacks, this book will interest clergy and physicians.

In some ways Mrs. Steiner's book is a serious indictment against the Church, not so much by what is said about the Church, as by what is not said. There is a short chapter upon religion, the first part dealing with "Theology as Therapy," in which two and one half pages are given to the practices of the Roman Catholic Church in helping people; two and one half pages to Judaism; two and one half to Christian Science, and one and a half to Protestantism. Only one short paragraph really deals with the subject.

The second part of the chapter, which is considerably longer than the first, deals with self-appointed "clergy" and their swindles. It is obvious that the author did not study the work of the clergy with people in trouble. She either preferred not to make such an investigation or she was not impressed with what she found. Neither does she say anything about the general physician and the number of people who go to him with their troubles. She gives attention constantly to psychiatrists and even psychoanalysts. If the author were to be true to the subject of her book, she would have had to discuss these two groups of professional persons: the general physician and the clergyman; for these two professions deal with more people with troubles than all the psychiatrists and psychiatric social workers put together. That does not say how well the problems are dealt with, but the title of the book does not indicate that the author was attempting to evaluate the treatment people with troubles received. Actually such an evaluation is made repeatedly throughout the book.

Despite the above shortcomings Mrs. Steiner has through her study rendered the field of mental hygiene a vital service.

Also, in spite of the fact that she has ignored the work of the clergy, we would do well to study "where people take their troubles"; for many of these people were once, and may be again, our parishioners. The fruitful practice of the quacks in dealing with heartsick people is a sad reflection upon the Church.—**R. L. D.**

On Facing Death

A BOOK OF COMFORT, *by Eric Parker. Harper and Brothers, 320 pp., $1.50.*

This little book is an anthology of prose and poetic writings dealing with death. Its purpose, as its title indicates, is to bring comfort to the bereaved out of experiences of those who have faced death as well as from those who have lost loved ones.

A Book of Comfort is divided into ten parts. The first section, under the title of "Sudden Death" is made up largely of writings that have come out of World War II. One selection particularly, "An Airman's Letter," is a great piece of writing. The other parts fall under the titles of Children, Husband and Wife, Near and Dear Friends, Doubt, Prayer, Rain and Sun, Two Worlds, Calendar of Thoughts (scripture readings). The book is well indexed both as to subjects and authors.

This is a book of courage. It deals with a subject that is greatly neglected; for we do not like to think about death either for ourselves or our loved ones. Consequently when death comes to us we are unprepared for it. This book is an effort to overcome this lack of preparation.

While both the author and the publisher are to be commended for their courage in trying to meet such a vital and basic need, the book misses the mark at many points. The book is too long. If the author had contented himself with using about one-fifth of the material he included, he would have produced a far more helpful book. Also the type is too small for ready reading, which is another reason for using less material.

A more serious shortcoming of the book is that the common touch is lacking. Only a few of the selections, specially the Scripture selections in the final section, speak to the average person who faces the Great Adventure that is death. The others are for the intellectual. In the face of death, there are but few who are intellectuals.

I have tried to think how this book can be useful in our pastoral task. Certainly to give it to a person who is facing death or to a bereaved person is not the way it should be used. My suggestion is that the pastor read the book, mark it carefully for future reference, and draw upon it for sermonic material upon the subject of death.

You will find here an abundance of excellent material for funeral sermons.—**R. L. D.**

PREPARATORY CLASSES:

A Plan for Enlistment

By EARL EDSON ALLEN

The pastor of First Methodist Church, Beloit, Wis., tells of a comprehensive plan for enrolling preparatory members among the baptized children. He read this article before the Watertown (Wis.) District Conference and submitted it to THE PASTOR *upon the request of the executive secretary of his Wisconsin Conference Board of Education (Walter Eyster).*

DR. MURRAY LEIFFER, of Garrett Biblical Institute, reports that William Dean Howells once asked an Irish boy: "If the devil should come here now, which would he take first, you or me?"

Without hesitating, the boy answered: "Me."

"What makes you say that?" asked Dr. Howells, and then no doubt wished that he hadn't pressed for an answer.

The boy replied: "He could get you any time!"

The devil does aim his darts at children and youth, because he wants slaves for as many years as possible. Virgil Kraft, pastor of First Church, Minneapolis, writes in *The Christian Advocate* that the day after the election in 1932, the *Brewery News* stated, "Not one-tenth of one per cent of the youth of America know the taste of real beer—we must educate them. . . ." Mr. Kraft goes on to tell that the brewery interests are spending $28,000,000 a year to make beer appealing, especially to the young of our country. We Christians will have to work with renewed zeal and effectiveness if we are going to beat the diabolical influences in our midst.

Our Crusade for Christ emphasis, stressing church school enrollment and attendance, is really a part of the program of evangelism. If we wait until persons are adolescents before we claim them for Christ, many of them will by then be so committed to a pagan way of life as to be permanently lost.

Again, if we are to turn the tide of slumping church school enrollment and attendance in spite of a declining birth rate—particularly among Protestants—we shall have to reach a higher percentage of children.

During the depression someone asked an aluminum salesman about his sales. "They are about as good as usual," he said. "But I have to work five times as hard."

Will we ministers and laymen pay a similar price for achievment?

Our last General Conference ingeniously provided a very effective way of making more specific the vows which parents take when they dedicate their children in baptism. This provision requires that we ministers ask the parents at the time of the baptism of their children to enroll them as preparatory members and to see to it that they enter membership instruction classes, at least by the time they are twelve years old.

Part of our Wisconsin Area Crusade program is to check our records of baptized children and to follow out the requirements of *The Discipline* to enroll them as preparatory members, using the double card forms so well provided by the Executive Secretary of our Wisconsin Area Crusade for Christ Council, Dr. Fred J. Jordan. The top part of the card, signed by the parents, and placed in the Church file, reads:

Having presented my child ———— for Christian Baptism, and thus consecrated him to God and the church, and having promised by precept and example I will seek to lead him into the love of God and the service of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is my desire that he shall be enrolled as a Preparatory member of the Methodist Church.

Birthday of the child ————.

The bottom part of the card bears the date of enrollment and the pastor's signature. At the top is written the parents' names, after which comes this explanation:

At your request your child ———— has been enrolled as a Preparatory member of the Methodist Church, with the understanding that upon reaching the age of twelve years (or earlier, if advisable) he will receive training in church membership.

This church is happy at all times to share with you the responsibilities of Christian education, and suggests that regular attendance at church, and family religion, will help you keep the Baptism vows unbroken.

In our First Church, Beloit, our secretaries found in the church constituency files, a baptismal section of the Permanent Church Record Book, and on church school enrollment cards 634 names of baptized children at present under 18 years of age. These names were checked against the membership roll, and the names of all church member children and young people removed, leaving an active list of 406 as preparatory member prospects. These names were listed, together with the names of parents, in family groups on three-by-five-inch cards. A special committee found every possible present address and placed it on the proper card.

Then we sent a mimeographed letlet explaining the enrollment plan and containing as many Enrollment cards as there were Preparatory Membership Prospects in the family, asking the parents to return the proper cards in the offering plate on Sunday, or by mail. To date 213 of these names have thus been accounted for. The parents of 15 prospects replied that they did not care to enroll their children, but the fathers and mothers of 193 children of these ages have agreed to the enrollment. (Incidentally, the mother of a very popular high school Junior telephoned me

that as a result of our letter, her daughter wanted to join the church with the next class to be received. She has been received.

A few weeks after the letter went out we mailed a follow-up postal card to parents who had not responded. In reply, we received many additional enrollment cards. Some parents telephoned for more information; others had lost their cards during moving or house-cleaning, and requested duplicates.

Now 177 of the original prospects are still to be accounted for. We propose to telephone the parents who are most likely to respond and to make personal calls upon the others as soon as possible, to encourage them to complete the enrollment.

I can hear several saying under their breath: "It would be better to call on all of these parents instead of writing to them." The only reason we got as many replies as possible by mail was because I just didn't have time to make so many special calls of this type (406) and simultaneously carry on the rest of my commitments. Whenever it is possible, I am sure that personal calls would be more satisfactory.

As part of this enrollment process I try to visit each home soon after a new baby is born, leaving a sample copy of *The Christian Home* and enrolling the child in our Nursery Department. The enrollment card is turned over to our church secretary, who sends the parents a certificate of enrollment. Then she sends the enrollment card to the nursery department secretary, who sends birthday cards to the enrollees.

Whenever we have a baptismal Sunday we try to send a notice to the parents of children not yet baptized, inviting them to register by telephone their children for baptism. The registration deadline is far enough ahead of Sunday to give time for filling out —but not dating—the baptismal certificates, so that they can be given to the parents at the service.

Mrs. Allen meets the parents and sponsors before the baptismal service, explains the vows and obligations enjoined in the ritual, dates the certificates and presents them, and enrolls as preparatory members all children whose parents agree.

Our Preparatory Membership file has two sections:

Section 1 contains the names of Sixth Grade preparatory members. These boys and girls receive special preparation for probationary membership during the winter quarter in Sunday school and are publicly received as probationary members on Palm Sunday. The following winter they enter a three months' course of intensive membership training under the direction of the pastor, leading up to confirmation and full membership on Palm Sunday. After confirmation their cards are removed from the preparatory file.

Section 2 contains the names of all other preparatory members.

Our General Conference has provided a fruitful method of evangelism among younger children. Let us use it.

TEACHING:
Content and Method

By ROGER E. ORTMAYER

To complement the article on "A Plan for Enlistment," Roger E. Ortmayer describes here a plan for preparatory classes of children on a two-point charge, laying stress upon the necessity of dealing with the basic content of the Christian faith in all teaching. Until recently he was pastor of Madison Methodist Parish, Madison, Ohio, but he is now on the staff of Mt. Union College, Alliance, Ohio, where he is directing studies concerning a program in rural churches in northeastern Ohio. He wrote the article in September, "What We Need More Of—Less Organization!"

Roger E. Ortmayer

METHODISM is not doctrinarian. Its beliefs are not all neatly packaged and labeled: "This is it! This is the Via Sanctus, according to the Holy Spirit, the General Conference, and the Council of Bishops, operating by the testament of John Wesley." But Methodism has a heritage. It has beliefs, convictions, a glorious history, and effective institutions.

Methodism claims to be the spiritual guide for 8,000,000 people. One wonders: "Do these millions know the heritage, beliefs, convictions, history and organization of their Church? If not, why?" No one knows how many are informed. Nor is much agreement found on the "why"; although a new Diogenes could quote the master, muttering from his darksome corner: "Nothing can be produced out of nothing!"

Particularly in rural congregations is ignorance concerning Methodism prevalent. There participation in the larger activities of the church has been slight. Often church school leadership among these churches is ineffective. Often we of the clergy receive into membership youngsters who have small comprehension of what they believe, why they believe, and the type of institution of which they are becoming a part. They have had no intimate fellowship with the man who becomes their pastor. They know not how to worship, nor the forms by which worship might become to them a soul-stirring experience. Therefore, in our rural churches, we felt that before a class should

be received into the church they should acquire a certain body of knowledge, and be instructed in prayer and worship.

Some good friends protest that the first aim is not good—the transference of a body of knowledge. I, for one, disagree, feeling that some of the ancient creeds of the Church, biblical passages, living hymns, and possibly even a modernized catechism should be memorized by the new member. If they do not get this basic knowledge in the church school, the minister must do the job in his preparatory membership class. Knowledge is transferable. It does not all have to be acted out—be "experience centered."

A pattern we have successfully used on a two-point charge, begins with a new year announcement in the church paper, in the Sunday bulletins, and orally, that a class in membership preparation will be instituted with the coming of Lent. Church school records and calling lists also provide sources of enlistment. Each boy and girl, however, brings a signed card from a parent or guardian requesting enrollment in the class.

On the first Sunday in Lent a class is organized in each church. Because many of the youngsters come from scattered homes, it is necessary to hold the class during the church school hour. In the village where the members are within walking distance of the church, it has been found to be more desirable to hold the classes on a Friday or Saturday afternoon, free from the competition and hurry that usually accompany a Sunday hour.

During Lent we try to follow the general Lenten pattern in the training. The major themes of the season are used, relating them to the experience of probationary church membership. On Palm Sunday, just before the reception of the members upon profession of faith, the class comes to the communion rail and is received into preparatory membership, following the ritual assigned for that purpose. The ceremony will be more effective for the youngsters if the girls, at least, can be dressed in white. We have used the white smocks of the junior choir.

Then for an entire year the pastor meets with the class in each church, except during a vacation in the middle of the summer. We try to make the class as objective as possible. We use the *Methodist Hymnal*, that most excellent aid to worship, spending several sessions on it alone, so we may become acquainted with real treasures. As practically as possible we become acquainted with the organization of the Methodist Church, particularly as it functions locally and in its conference set-up. We emphasize the sacrament of Holy Communion, practicing the best ways of kneeling and approach, studying its purpose and history, and in every way trying to make the sacrament to become in the youngsters' lives a high and holy experience, to be looked for in happy expectation.

And we inject some doctrine. Methodism does have some convictions concerning God, His Son, the Trinity. Methodism has a social creed. We use it. We help a rural class to come to an appreciation of God in his created world, in the land, the sweet soil.

There is almost no end concerning what ought to be done in a preparatory class. I hardly see how more than the minimum can be accomplished in less than forty or fifty sessions. More adequate training materials are needed. Our church will provide them. Until it does we must depend much upon our own ingenuity. But may we always remember that beyond understanding is love. Knowledge tends to make people conceited, it is love that builds us up (I Cor. 8:1).

Rural Community Night

By DONALD H. JAMES

When the process of centralization began to close a half dozen schools in the countryside of Tunnel, N. Y., the people needed some means of keeping their community traditions alive. The answer came when Conference Supply Pastor Tracy Webster led the Methodist Church to sponsor "Community Night," featuring local talent and a neighboring spirit. Donald H. James, present pastor of the church, who serves the United Churches, Chenango Forks, N. Y., tells here how the community programs work.

AN ATTENDANCE of one hundred people would be a disappointment in a large city church, but to the tiny rural church of a remote village of fifteen homes, one hundred people present is the thrill of a lifetime.

Most country churches look to the large wedding, or the Gypsy Smith revival service, or an entertainment of nationally advertised cowboy singers to bring in the crowds. But for Tunnel, N. Y., it was the Community Night. And the Community Night is as essential to the welfare of Tunnel today as the pulpit is to the preacher.

Whether the idea started by careful accident or by plan, does not matter. Its success was due to the patience of a conference supply, Brother Tracy Webster, and to the cooperation of talented parishioners.

The beginning of the Community Night is a legend at Tunnel. Many dramatic stories have grown during the past ten years, but in it all we can see the threads of a heroic struggle.

The Tunnel church was not exactly closed, but it might just as well have been as far as its reputation was concerned. First tacked on to one circuit, and then to another, it was soon suspended in conference mid-air without

any circuit or preacher. Brother Webster already had three churches, and he was not what you would call a young man, but he braved the situation, and took on Tunnel as the fourth appointment.

You hear stories now and then of a minister going into a church closed or nearly so. He has to ring the bell, take care of the janitor work, lead singing without a pianist or organist, and take care of the collection when the service is over. When he sees two or three out to service he has to decide whether to have preaching, or a prolonged session of the Sunday school. When the service is over he looks at the offering of perhaps not more than fifty cents, and wonders if it will take care of one-half the gasoline burned on the trip over.

Such stories have arisen about the Tunnel church. Possibly exaggerated, yet there was more than a grain of truth. The church was at low ebb. Something had to be done. The pastor called; that was good. A few people started to come to church; that also was good. But the Community Night was what really transformed the church.

The Community Night is not a new idea, entirely. You have seen Children's Day services in which the children take part, the parents come to watch, and the church attendance is much larger than usual. You have been to amateur programs in which half the neighborhood exhibited its talent, and the other half made up the audience. And you have been to the old-fashioned country school program which had its short plays, pageants, and colorful array of well planned entertainment. The Tunnel Community Night is a combination of all these ideas, with an abundance of sacred music thrown in for good measure. And of course there is prayer, and a few remarks or short sermonette from the pastor.

A half dozen country schools dotted the Tunnel countryside. Most of these were in the process of centralization, and about to be closed. The people needed an institution to keep alive the community traditions. Most of the families had not been brought up in the church, and were not inclined to attend the regular services. The Community Night was the answer to the community need.

Often a single family or person would form the committee to sponsor a complete program. Sometimes several families would serve on a committee. Everyone would co-operate. In the fall and spring once a month would not be too often. Before each Community Night church attendance would improve as people would come out to plan, practice, and decorate for the event. And on Community Night there would be a record attendance, often more than a hundred from the countryside.

Visitors have been shocked to hear "I Had a Little Talk with the Lord" on a Sunday evening. Guest singers have been stunned to have the audience applaud a prayer song. And everyone is amused at the way the congregation will clap hands when two tiny tots walk onto the platform, forget their pieces, and go through strange antics to pass away a few moment's time—such as the night the little sisters slapped each others' faces in a family spat on the stage.

The minister has just a few things to remember. The Community Night directors usually want three weeks or so to work on a program. They like a supply of program material on hand. Several complete rehearsals are usually needed. For pageants it helps to depend on one neighborhood at a time, so that the participants can get together for frequent practice. Beginning on time, and a rapidly moving program are important assets. And the publicity can usually determine success or failure in the size of the attendance. Penny postals, clearly mimeographed, mentioning a few features of the program, are sufficient, if in the mail several days in advance of the evening.

Often it is surprising what local talent can do. Not long ago we had a program entitled, "The Old Oaken Bucket." A local crew of volunteers excavated century-old pictures, antique furniture, and an ancient communion set. One of the parishioners had produced the old oaken bucket from an old-fashioned bucket well on his place. And of course there was an appeal to the "old time religion" at its best, with a scene of a little girl in a night robe kneeling at her mother's knee listening to words from the Bible and then praying, "Now I lay me. . . ." But words cannot describe the tremendous appeal of this home-made pageant. The minister's eyes were moistened, too, as he pronounced the benediction.

During the war Community Nights were difficult. There was gasoline shortage, lack of tires, Sunday employment, overworked people, and a general lack of time. But through it all Community Nights continued as often as possible—sometimes five or six a year. But our postwar project must revive the idea as a monthly feature.

Several months ago a minister was discussing Tunnel, and remarked, "That little church certainly has made a lot of progress. It was not long ago the conference thought it was closed. And now they pay nearly five hundred dollars a year as minister's salary." Yes, Tunnel has done well. Her missionary giving has increased proportionately. She accepted her Crusade for Christ quota the night it was announced, and has paid it in quarterly installments ahead of time. Her finances are good, her Sunday School is growing, but she needs the Community Night. A year or two without the Community Night, and Tunnel would lose out.

Perhaps some other minister could develop a program so that Tunnel would not need her Community Night. But I don't think I could, even if I knew what that parish program might be. I have been at Tunnel too long. I would miss the Community Night. It is a tradition, as characteristic of Tunnel as is the Delaware and Hudson railroad opening in the hillside from which the village derives its name.

Christian Service Flag

By E. L. CRUMP

The pastor of West Nashville Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn., describes here his service of presentation, a service at which seventeen young volunteers for full-time Christian service were honored by their church. The picture shows Mr. Crump (left) presenting the flag to J. B. Robinson, chairman of the Board of Stewards.

DURING my six years as pastor of the West Nashville Methodist Church, seventeen young people have volunteered for full-time Christian service.

Two of the young men who had been licensed as local preachers and had been preaching in churches throughout this section and were very favorably received were studying for their B.D. degrees when they volunteered for service in the Army. The Rev. David Lee Hambrick was killed in action in Germany. The Rev. Anderson Russell was killed in action on Okinawa. Their names head the list on our Service Flag and are indicated by two white ribbons.

Six of our young people have gone as directors of religious education in churches throughout the country. They are:

Mrs. Anderson Russell, director of religious education, Highlands Methodist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; Miss Laura Oakley Hunter, director of children's work in a Methodist Church in Akron, Ohio; Miss Cornelia Russell, director of religious education, St. Andrews Methodist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Miss Frances Ryden, First Methodist Church, Borger, Texas. Miss Dorothy Lish, director of religious education at Wilmington, Del.

These names are indicated on the flag on gold ribbons.

Nine young people who are still in

Christian Service Flag

my church are in the process of training for full-time Christian service. They are indicated on the flag by red ribbons. They are as follows:

Miss Katherine Calhoun, our church secretary and student at Scarritt College; Miss Mildred Bible, a student in Scarritt College; Misses Gloria Laubheimer and Laura Shirley, students in Peabody College; Dolye Ross, in service in the Army in the Pacific. Wayne Hoyal, Edward Crump, Jr., Frances Ann Taylor, and Imogene Rogers, in high school.

The Flag

These seventeen people are listed on the flag by name as indicated above, their names being hand embroidered on the ribbons of different colors. The whole flag is a 3x4 foot royal blue crepe with a gold fringe all the way around it. The upper portion of this flag contains a large Maltese cross, in the center of which there is a large Latin cross. Surrounding the large Latin cross there are seventeen small Latin crosses representing the seventeen names below. There are two gold stars above two of the crosses representing those who have died in the service. A circle joins the four arms of the cross as in the familiar Methodist Youth Fellowship emblem. All the figures on the blue background of the flag are of gold color. The colors blue and gold were chosen because they are the colors of the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

In the service on a recent Sunday morning, I presented this flag to Mr. J. B. Robinson, the chairman of our Board of Stewards, in recognition of the dedication of the young people's lives. The eight young people who were present in the service came forward to reaffirm their dedication publicly in answer to certain challenges from the pastor.

I told them that God was still alive and running the world but that he was desperately looking for some men and women to help him. I explained that God needed Christian men as farmers, teachers and doctors, lawyers, engineers, builders, etc., but that he needed also many for special religious activities. He needs preachers, ministers, religious education directors, and Christian workers in many fields of specialized activities.

I went on to say that we were glad these young people had heard God's call and had seen His need and were giving themselves to answer it. I said that God needed them and would ever be with them to help them in their service. I explained that the way was long and sometimes discouraging and that even after they were actively at work in their chosen vocation for God they would still be sorely tried. I explained that they would have to make up their minds from the start always to be willing to bear a cross. That is why the service flag contained a cross for each one of them.

Service of Dedication

The conclusion ran something like this:

The cross, the symbol of our faith, is a symbol of the victory that our Master had over death and will be a symbol on the flag for the victory that you will attain if you will follow Jesus. The large cross is the cross of Christ. He first started carrying it for God. He will be carrying yours with you. The circle represents the youth of the Methodist Church around the world who are with you in your great endeavor. The arms of the cross point in all directions, North, South, East, and West, showing you where you are needed. The Maltese cross will ever indicate to you with its eight points the eight traits of Christian character which Jesus so beautifully set forth in the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. But you will notice that at the foot of the cross there is still plenty of room for other workers who will join with you to help God in his work. There will always be room beneath the cross for anyone who will answer God's call. The design of the flag is ever incomplete. No matter how many names may be added to it it will never be in perfect balance. It is always in the process of growing.

Your church prays for you that you may be steadfast and that you may ever press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Do you in the presence of this congregation solemnly reaffirm the dedication of your life to God for full-time religious service in carrying on the work of His Kingdom?

Answer: I do, God being my helper.

Will you strive diligently to live and prepare yourself properly so that you may ever be and do your best for the Master?

Answer: I will, by the help of God.

One of the young people, was called upon to lead the group in prayer, after which the pastor, the group at the altar, the choir, and the entire congregation joined in the chorus lead by the pastor "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me."

The flag was then presented to the chairman of the board of stewards, asking that the church do all it could in the future to offer encouragement to all those who are planning to give themselves for full-time service. The chairman accepted the flag with an expression of his faith in the young people and in the future of the church.

The Meaning of Lent

By R. P. MARSHALL

To pastors now thinking about the next Lenten observance in their churches, Pastor Marshall suggests that Protestants, having broken for many years with the custom of rigid observance of Lent, are now free to begin again and to make this season a time of spiritual enrichment. He serves First Methodist Church, Brooksville, Fla.

UNTIL a few years ago, the observance of Lent was confined to the liturgical Churches, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran. Nowadays almost all of the Protestant denominations have accepted the traditional season of repentance, and are using it as an aid to their spiritual life. Some are confining their observance to the last week or two of Lent, when they conduct preaching missions preparatory to the Easter ingathering; others are beginning on Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent), and carrying on an intensive program of instruction and evangelistic effort throughout the season.

There is in some quarters a fear of imitating the Roman Catholic Church in this Lenten observance. One large denomination refuses even to observe Easter in traditional fashion, but usually compromises with custom sufficiently to allow its children to roll Easter eggs! Thus it exhibits a strange reluctance to use the spiritual meaning of the festival, while accepting the pagan idea of a spring festival of fertility.

Methodism has come to see that the ancient Church was wise in setting aside forty days of self-denial and repentance, and has adopted the old custom as it was observed in the time of Wesley.

The Word *Lent,* used only among English-speaking peoples, comes from the Saxon word *lencten,* which means *spring* or the time of lengthening days. All primitive peoples have felt the need of a season of refreshment and of discipline. The Church took over the pagan idea of a spring festival and made it, instead of a time of unbridled license in honor of the gods and goddesses of fertility, the season of penitence and prayer.

Sometimes the truth behind the observance was lost in the maze of regulations. So strict was the rule for good churchmen that Lent became a time of hardship for those who would put self above spiritual life. In an effort to mortify the flesh, the Church provided rules that denied to the faithful many harmless pleasures. Meat was forbidden on certain days, and fasting was observed with varying degrees of severity.

After such an observance of the Lenten fast, it was natural that Easter should become all the more joyful. It was also natural that the less religious should make the days immediately preceding Lent the occasion of hilarity as they took a last-minute fling at the pleasures of the flesh. Here is the origin of Mardi gras, or Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) when, as a Catholic writer expresses it, "hell and a wicked world employ all their seductive arts to corrupt immortal souls." Probably originating in a desire to dramatize the conflict between the spiritual life and the world, this carnival season soon degenerated into the expression of unhallowed pleasure and reckless abandon.

Protestants, having broken for many years with the custom of rigid observance of Lent, are free to begin again in the primitive manner, and to make this season more than a time of bodily abstinence from certain foods and pleasures. Avoiding the rigor of the fast, they may also avoid the excesses of the preceding days.

Ash Wednesday ushers in the Lenten forty days, and comes at various times, according to the date of Easter. On this day, it was the custom in ancient times for the priest to mark each worshiper with the sign of the cross in ashes. Thus the faithful would bear the mark of their penitence for all the world to see. Seldom observed outside of the Roman Church, this custom was based on the Jewish symbolism, which marked each time of penitence by the wearing of rough, coarse garments, and the disfiguring of the features by smears of ashes. Modern Christians would find this custom repugnant, but they should retain its inward significance. Ash Wednesday can be a time of blessing if observed as a day of humble prayer. *God be merciful to me a sinner* should be the cry of every child of God; for *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

The Meaning of Lent

Lent is properly a time for the remembrance of our sins. The humanistic notion that man need not worry about his sins is contrary to all teaching of the Gospel. Sin is a reality. He who doubts this need only to look at the world about him. We ourselves are conscious of our misdoings and to remember them is grievous to us. What could be more natural than that we should give some time to assessing our failures?

Phillips Brooks, in a memorable sermon on the significance of Ash Wednesday, gave as an illustration the story of Peter. First, he said, the apostle was not conscious of any lack in himself. Seeing Jesus, he promised to follow him wherever he went: *Through all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.* That was the confident assertion of a newborn convert. Yet, a few months later, as he tries to walk upon the water, he is reminded that his powers are limited. There are some things he cannot do. It is a thoughtful Cephas that hauls himself into the boat.

Then comes the terrible scene in the courtyard of the high priest's palace. Jesus is on trial, while the once-boastful disciple lurks without. He would never be offended, yet now he quails before the inquisitive eyes of a servant girl. He knows now what it means to be a disciple. He knows that he is not yet ready to pay the price.

Then there is the final scene, there by the lake again, when Jesus, without a word in rebuke, reminds Peter of his failures by asking three questions. Now, in truth Peter sees the enormity of his sin. Look closely at this picture; for it is the picture of God's dealings with man. He is not much interested in our protestations of sorrow; he passes by our efforts at explanation. All he asks is that we make an effort toward amendment. Peter knew that his sin had already been forgiven; that Jesus had been as anxious to get it out of the way as he had been. He knew that the moment when he had made up his mind to give his life, if need be, for his master, that same loving Master had forgiven him.

Thus it is that a repentance which does no more than mourn over sins cannot save us. As we begin our Lenten fast, we must realize that we are not attempting to propitiate an angry God by our sacrifices. We cannot pay the price for sin by abstinence from meat or by the denial of pleasure.

Remembrance of Our Saviour

This is a time to remember Jesus. Each day during the season, our Bible reading should follow the life of Christ, preferably in the short and dramatic Gospel of Mark. Each day in our prayers, we should ask for a closer walk with Him.

Remembering Jesus will bring to our minds the life that he lived upon earth: how he went about doing good; how he spent his time in absolute communion with his Father; how he freely forgave the sins of those who were repentant; how he taught that God is interested in deeds more than in mere mouth-worship; how he was able to heal the sick and to raise the dead. Remembering these things, we will be able to orient ourselves in our journey to the goal of Christian character.

It is a mistake to suppose, as many Evangelical theologians have seemed to do, that conversion is the attainment of the highest state of blessedness. It is not the end; it is the beginning. The Christian life must be a progressive revelation and a growth in grace. This is not to say that we will not reach many separate steps or degrees, nor that our life will be marked by no crisis. The study of Christian experience shows that all great saints have had times of spiritual refreshment which seemed to mark a definite step along the way. It is dangerous, however, to mark out certain of these steps and call them by number. The man who is interested in obtaining the "second" or "third" blessing is likely to become lopsided in his development, and to place more emphasis upon the gifts than upon the Giver. A famous preacher, when asked if he had received the "second blessing," replied that he had not. "I wanted it," he said, "but when I saw what it did to others, I decided to skip it."

But there are blessings innumerable that the Christian will not want to "skip." They may mark the attainment of a spiritual grace which we have long prayed for, and there is no reason to believe that God will not give to his children the gifts that they need.

Here is a man who seeks to gain control of a quick temper. He can receive the power to hold that temper in check, but it will come only with fasting and prayer. He cannot kneel down and say, "Father, give me a cool head," and rise up with the blessing. Why? Does God desire that he should go through some sort of mumbo-jumbo or incantation in order to have his prayer answered? Not at all, but man is so constituted that he must break his own evil habits; he must fill his heart with the remembrance of Christ's meekness; he must become a new creature.

Here is a woman who wishes above all things to be rid of that unfortunate habit of "speaking her mind." Often she has excused herself by saying, "It's just my nature to say what I think, and let the chips fall where they may." But deep down in her heart she realizes that such mind-speaking has lost her friends and gained her no peace. What shall she do? There is a remedy. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of her faith, she may so fill her heart with his love and forbearance that tenderness and compassion for the mistakes of others may take the place of faultfinding and a captious spirit.

Lent is primarily a time for self-denial, not only in physical things, but in the realm of the spirit. There are many indulgences which may be safely used by the Christian. It is no mortal sin to sleep late in the morning when there is no pressing duty to be done. It is no sin to listen to good plays and read good books. It is permissible to enjoy oneself in clean and healthful amusement. But there must come a time in our lives when, for the sake of our souls, we deny ourselves the legitimate in order to better fit ourselves for God's kingdom.

Here is the inner meaning of Lent: That we should, by prayer and self-denial, prepare our spirits for the Easter season of joy. Happiness is all the more glorious when it comes in contrast to sorrow. We are familiar with the delights of contrasting tastes and physical sensations. Sugar is sweeter when it follows something sour, and the warmth of fire is all the more pleasant when one comes in from a tramp in the snow. By the discipline of Lent, we prepare ourselves for the joys of resurrection time.

Despite the Church's emphasis upon abstinence from certain foods and pleasures, it must be noted that this type of fasting is only the shadow of the reality of inward self-discipline. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for the ostentatious way in which they observed the fast days; he poked good-natured fun at the spectacle of the street-corner praying of the zealous follower of Moses; he asserted his power over the

Sabbath and his right to break the little, annoying regulations which tradition had fastened upon the people.

"But when you fast," said Jesus, let no one be aware that you are fasting. Do not make your religious observance the occasion of spiritual pride. For the Christian, fasting and abstinence from certain foods is helpful only so far as it ministers to the inner life.

It is profitable, nevertheless, for us to deny ourselves many of the legitimate pleasures of the table and of ordinary social life. In the liturgical churches, weddings are not celebrated with the usual festivities; social gatherings are limited to the absolutely needful; and the members are expected to be more diligent in attending divine worship.

Protestants might well emulate his example. Used rightly, Lent can be made a season of spiritual refreshment which will bring new life to any congregation. It may be observed in the more rigid form of tradition or in a modified fashion which may consist in nothing more than added emphasis upon worship and self-denial, but however it is used, it can be the means of bringing God's presence into our hearts.

Lent is, in most Protestant churches, pre-eminently a time for decision. Instruction classes are held and children are prepared for confirmation or reception into the church. But if it is no more than this, much of the significance of the season is missed. Decision Day has been overworked and misused. Thousands of children have been brought to our altars without ever experiencing any deep change of motive or of direction. They have decided to join the church because it seems the thing to do. True, there is no justification for the old idea that a cataclysmic conversion is the only requirement for admission into God's family. More and more, we are coming to see that children must be brought up in the church, that they must be baptized in infancy, and that the ceremony which brings them into full membership is only the recognition of their status, already fixed by God. We are admitting that this rite gives to them, according to God's promise, the power of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of our hands (granting that the intention of the child be pure and to that end), but that it does not signify that they have attained unto any special state of grace. In other words, the Church does not teach that conversion is always a condition of membership, but that it is expected to follow as a result.

Nevertheless, confirmation is not to be lightly given. All of the means of grace are to be used to bring the child to the right attitude of expectant waiting for the gift of the Spirit. If we teach that the ceremony is only the formal acknowledgment of membership within a group, or the outward sign of something that has already taken place, we fail to consider the greatest blessing of the rite. Confirmation must *do something;* it must confirm or strengthen a resolution already made; it must give power to a desire already present; it must set the seal of the Holy Spirit upon a life already given to God.

It is fitting, therefore, that we should offer to all in these days an opportunity to become members of Christ's Church, and it is especially fitting that we should make Easter the time when we baptize and receive them into the family of God. But that is only a part of our opportunity; for we who are members can renew our own vows and seek God's blessing on our lives.

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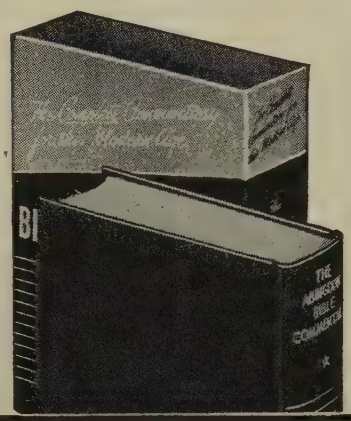

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hymns

SINGING:

With Spirit and Understanding

By BLISS WIANT

Four ways to inspire enthusiasm, so that the people will welcome and learn new hymns, are suggested here by the associate professor of music, Scarritt College for Christian Workers, who also discusses some Christmas hymns. Mr. Wiant and his wife, who spent twenty years in China, are the only couple ever sent out by any mission board for full-time work in music on a life-time basis. They will return to Peking when the field is again opened.

THE normal reaction of a Christian to the joy which springs from his faith prompts him to express himself in song. One of the strikingly new features of first century Christians was that they dared to give vent to their feelings in this way. Choirs and soloists, cantors and specialists had provided most of the music immediately previous to this time, but, with the new spirit of Jesus dominating their lives, the Christians wanted to sing about it. History records that these ardent Christians even got up before breakfast to sing! Paul and Silas broke the silence of a prisoner's midnight so that all their companions heard and listened. No one ever heard of spontaneous singing at midnight before—an indoor serenade to the Christ! Important references to this vital type of song are found in various places—Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13. A new and basically important body of church music was being born—music for the ordinary congregation.

But mere singing is not worship, nor is it edifying. Paul warned against an exclusively emotional outlet in song when he advised the Church at Corinth (I Cor. 14:15): *I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* A nonsense refrain or a "tra-la-la" phrase may let off emotional steam but it cannot be called "singing with the understanding." Both the emotions and the intellect must be employed if true worship is to be realized.

The question then arises: How can we who are responsible for the singing of our congregations create a situation in which the emotionally stirred worshiper can sing both with the spirit and with the understanding?

Before starting any program of this kind, it is necessary to spend time in research. We should choose hymns that have a combination of enduring music and words. Cheap music and doggerel do not make a good hymn. Many of the so-called "good old songs" are nothing but trite melodies coupled with words of no literary value, and born a generation or two ago. The oldest texts for hymns are those based upon the Psalms, in use for two milleniums by Jews and Christians. There are a few hymns from the first few centuries of Christendom. The truly "good old songs" are those which are the residue of the various centuries of Christian life and experience, songs which have become a part of the heritage of Christendom.

To sing with the understanding requires honest, intellectual effort. Great hymns have great and noble ideas. As long as the words remain between the lines of music their literary value may be lessened. Copy the words of a hymn to be studied on a separate sheet of paper. Carefully and prayerfully study the ideas expressed to discover what experience of God the writer must have had which inspired him to write the words. Was the main source of inspiration some Scripture passage, or a personal experience? What purpose prompted the writing? What effect upon the lives of other folk have the words had? What appeal has the message of the hymn for us today?

Investigate the source of the melody. Folk tunes, secular melody, instrumental music, opera tunes—many interesting sources—may be found for melodies which, in some cases, have direct bearing upon the words themselves. The more detailed knowledge we can obtain concerning a given hymn the more we can sing with the understanding.

Our real problem is how to inspire enthusiasm in the congregation so that the people will welcome the new hymn and learn it. To that end these few suggestions are offered:

1. Present in as interesting and human a way as possible all the historical information that can be obtained relative to the composition of the hymn, the words, the personalities involved, including your own personal reactions to the message of the hymn.

2. Sing in an enthusiastic and reverent manner the new hymn to the congregation. Most ministers can sing melodies. Their own presentation may not be musically perfect but spiritually it should be impressive. If the minister cannot carry a tune (a real rarity) then the young people of the church would be honored to do their part in the first presentation. They should be used either first or second in this capacity. In all that is done, the attitude must be one of joy in sharing with the people that which is beautiful and will enrich their Christian experience and living.

3. Ask the congregation to sing the melody. Expect a fine response from the audience. Do not allow anyone to attempt the harmony, but get a feeling of solidarity and unity which comes from unisonous singing. Was it not John Wesley himself who advised his congregations al-

ways to sing the melody and not attempt to sing the other parts? He said that the "devil" was in the harmony. When folk who do not know enough about music try to sing the other parts, the effect will likely be weird.

4. Do not tire the group by a tedious repetition of the first stanza, but proceed to the next. At a later time, either in the same meeting or at subsequent ones, revive their interest by your original zest. On the second presentation the group will happily claim the newly learned hymn as their own—a permanent possession.

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

Hymn No. 104 in *The Methodist Hymnal,* "In the Bleak Midwinter," is only forty years old, and yet it has already become one of the beautiful classics of the Christmas season. It was created by recognized artists in poetry and music, a woman and a man whose personal lives reflected genuine religion and spiritual vitality.

Christina G. Rossetti, author of the hymn, was born in London of distinguished Italian parents. Her father was professor of Italian at King's College, London. She had two famous brothers, one of whom was an artist who chose his sister for the face of the Virgin Mary in "Ecce Ancilla Domini"—*Behold the Handmaiden of the Lord.* Her life of service was in religious activities and in the writing of sensitive poetry which revealed an intense love of nature and the God of nature. These qualities are found not only in this hymn but also in the two other hymns from her pen in this hymnal: No. 94, *"Love Came Down at Christmas,"* and No. 436, *"The Shepherds Had an Angel."*

The first stanza of hymn No. 104 is full of natural scenery: the bleakness of winter, with frost and wind; with ice as hard as stone and very deep snow. Into such an environment came the "Lord God Almighty," for he is mightier than either heaven or earth; they "shall flee away" when he comes to reign.

The utter humanity of the Babe is poignantly expressed in the third stanza where the mother truly loves her little son and worshiped him with a kiss! What can we, ordinary followers of Jesus, give him that can express our devotion to him? "Give my heart," says the hymn; and what can be more precious that we have to give than our very lives? How could a hymn breathe a more deeply devotional spirit than this one?

The melody was written by a master musician, Gustav Holst. A British subject, he had a rich background from several countries, and five generations of musicians. He was a lover of people and of music, working among laborers for a while; among soldiers during World War I; communicating a love of the finest music to any body of men, women or children. Among his many powerful and well-known compositions is the important "Hymn of Jesus" based upon apocryphal New Testament material. He composed many hymn tunes which are well known in English church circles. The musical setting for this hymn was made especially for these words and is a very beautiful one. Such a combination of artistic expression in both words and music and from the soul of devout artists is not often found. To learn this new hymn will add permanent joy to any learner.

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THE WORD

In the beginning was the Word; behold Him to whom Mary listened. And the Word was made flesh; behold Him whom Martha served.

—St. Augustine.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

For my part, I think the chief reason which prompted the invisible God to become visible in the flesh and to hold converse with men was to lead carnal men, who are only able to love carnally, to the healthful love of his flesh, and afterwards, little by little, to spiritual love.

—St. Bernard.

CHRISTMAS

Send, O God, into the darkness of this troubled world the light of thy Son. Let the star of thy hope touch the minds of all men with the bright beams of mercy and truth; and so direct our steps that we may ever walk in the way revealed to us, as the shepherds of Bethlehem walked with joy to the manger where he dwelt who now and ever reigns in our hearts, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—From *The Book of Worship for Church and Home.*

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

As we commemorate the holy nativity of our Lord, let us remember:

His lowly toil and his lonely way,

The gracious words of his lips and the deep compassion of his heart,

His friendship for the defeated and his care for the outcast,

The crown of thorns and the cruel cross,

His victory over death and his promised peace to all men.

The presence of his spirit and the assurance of eternal life.

As we celebrate Christmas, let us rejoice:

For the light that shines on our pathway,

For the great redemption revealed in the coming of Jesus Christ,

For the fellowship of faith in the beloved community of the Church.

—From *The Book of Worship for Church and Home.*

THAT GOD MIGHT WEEP . . .

Why was the Word made flesh, why the agony and the cross and the dereliction, if not in order that the inconceivable might become fact, that the Infinite Perfect might weep and sweat drops of sorrow for the sufferings of men, and so bring them back by the only way possible to the deepest knowledge of His love and so to love Him, and to become once again children—themselves. The Word was made flesh that God might suffer with His servants.

—Gerald Vann, in *The Heart of Man* (Longmans, Green).

A LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS

Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace, good will toward men.

O God, thou art our salvation; we will trust, and not be afraid. Thou art our strength and our song.

Therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation.

We thank thee for the birth of Jesus, that thy Spirit was upon him, that he was anointed to preach good tidings to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Help us to make our present time the acceptable year of the Lord.

O God, enable us, as we worship thee, to kindle with the joy of simple shepherds long ago at the thought of all that came to the world in the birth of the child Jesus.

Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.

Help us, O God, in the light of the shining star to realize the wastes and desolations of the world, to feel the weight of the world's sorrow and need, to be made aware of the power of evil, to see what spiritual loss is caused by man's hatred and sins.

Help us with the spirit of Jesus to build the old wastes and to raise up the former desolations.

Forgive us, O God, for our weariness of heart through great conflict and exertion. Suffer us not to become creatures and nations of selfishness, of narrow, foolish pride; marred with hardness of heart, and weakened by fear and suspicion.

Grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies may serve thee without fear.

Over the face of the ancient earth, weary and torn with strife, the passing generations have come and are gone, and have not seen the triumph of good will among men; yet we give thanks for the unceasing renewal of life born to new hopes and strong to achieve new victories of good.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

In the light of the shining star that giveth happiness to little children and cheer to all, help us to renew our zeal for that good time when none shall be far off or forgotten, but shall live within the circle of the blessed life.

May the dayspring from on high visit us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Amen.

—From *The Book of Worship for Church and Home.*

MAN GREETS GOD

Christmas and the Epiphany to a Christian are no orgy of sentimentality beside a cute little manger in a romantic barn beneath an angel-studded sky. Christmas and the Epiphany involve crisis, testing, judgment. They tell of the coming of God into a world which will have none of Him. God comes and is relegated to a stinking little stable; His mother is cold, alone save for old Joseph; His only human worshipers are a few dazed yokels and three star-mad astrologers. No one else cares! Adore the God of Bethlehem, for God so loves the world; but weep before the God of Bethlehem, that man should greet God with contempt.

—Bernard Iddings Bell, in *God Is Not Dead* (Harper).

DELAYED LANDING

Why is God landing in this enemy-occupied world in disguise and starting a sort of secret society to undermine the devil? Why isn't he landing in force, invading it? Is it that He isn't strong enough? Well, Christians think He's going to land in force; we don't know when. But we can guess why He's delaying. He wants to give us the chance of joining His side freely. I don't suppose you and I would think much of a Frenchman who waited until the Allies were marching into Berlin and then announced he was on our side. God will invade. But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realize what it will be like when He does. When that happens, it's the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play's over. God's going to invade, all right: but what's the good of saying you're on His side *then*, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else—something it never entered your head to conceive—comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left?

—C. S. Lewis, in *The Case for Christianity* (Macmillan).

AGE OF MIRACLES

Luther's birthplace was Eisleben in Saxony; he came into the world there on November 10, 1483. It was an accident that gave this honor to Eisleben. His parents, poor mine-laborers in a village of that region, named Mohra, had gone to the Eisleben winter-fair: in the tumult of this scene the Frau Luther was taken with travail, found refuge in some poor house there and the boy she bore was named Martin Luther. Strange enough to reflect upon it. This poor Frau Luther, she had gone with her husband to make her small merchandisings; perhaps to sell the lock of yarn she had been spinning, to buy the small winter-necessities for the narrow hut or household; in the whole world, that day, there was not a more entirely unimportant-looking pair of people than this miner and his wife. And yet what were all emperors, popes and potentates, in comparison? There was born here, once more, a mighty man; whose light was to flame as the beacon over long centuries and epochs of the world; the whole world and its history was waiting for this man. It is strange, it is great. It leads us back to another birth-hour, in a still meaner environment, eighteen hundred years ago—of which it is fit that we *say* nothing, that we think only in silence; for what words are there! The age of miracles past? The age of miracles is forever here!

—Thomas Carlyle, in *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

LAW FOR LEADERSHIP

It is a law of our republic that no man may be elevated to the presidency unless he be born within our national boundaries. No matter his blood and breeding, to become the supreme leader and commander of our people he must begin life with us. So the Son of God had to be born even as we, had to live among us, had to beautify the commonest circumstances of life by His own touch, and had to redeem life first by living it.

—Robert Freeman, D.D.

THE MAGI

You know how sometimes on a pitch black night in the country, you see far off one glimmer of light and you follow it and it turns out to be just a candle in a cottage window—but it was enough to assure you of life ahead, to give you the lead you wanted in the dark. In the same way, when the Magi turned from their abstruse calculations in search of heaven and followed a star, they did not arrive at a great mathematical result or revelation of the cosmic mind. They found a poor little family party and were brought to their knees—because, like the truly wise, they were really humble-minded—before a baby born under most unfortunate circumstances, a mystery of human life, a little growing thing.

—Evelyn Underhill, in *Light of Christ* (Longmans, Green).

HE DWELT AMONG US

The most wonderful event in all this world's history was the Son of God becoming man. This happened when He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. He came that He might get nearer to the people, and tell them of God's love.

A story is told of a Moravian missionary who went to the West Indies to preach to the slaves; but they were toiling all the day in the fields, and he could not get near to them. So he had himself sold as a slave and went among the other slaves, toiling with them in the fields that he might tell the story of God's love. This illustrates in a way what Christ did.

—J. R. Miller

RARE PETITION

"Give me not riches," is scarce the prayer of one in ten thousand. Straws, and sticks, and dust, with most, are the great things now looked after.

—Interpreter, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.*

THE ANSWER

Bishop Moule has told of an entertainment given in London for the benefit of a group of men who were going to the front. Near the close of the program, at the direction of his colonel, a young officer arose to express the men's thanks. He was happy in the words he chose, words of humor and of charm. Then suddenly, as though it were an afterthought, and using an entirely different tone of voice he added: "We are soon crossing to France . . . and very possibly, of course, to death. Will any of our friends here tell us how to die?"

There was a long silence. It seemed that no one knew just what to say. Then the answer came. One of the singers, who had been taking part in the entertainment, made her way quietly to the front and began to sing the great aria from *Elijah*, "O Rest in the Lord."

—G. Ray Jordan, in *The Supreme Possession* (Abingdon-Cokesbury).

OUR CONTRADICTION

An English philosopher and an Indian sage were in conversation. The former pointed proudly to technical advance. Replied the latter: "You can fly through the air like birds and swim the sea like fishes, but how to walk on the earth you do not yet know."

—Roy Lawson Tawes, in *The Global Christ* (Abingdon-Cokesbury).

REVIEWS

Reviewers

Eleazer, R. B., staff member, Department of General Church School Work, Division of the Local Church, Methodist Board of Education.

Gross, John O., secretary, Department of Educational Institutions, Methodist Board of Education.

Kennedy, Gerald, Methodist pastor, Lincoln, Nebraska, and former professor of homiletics, Pacific School of Religion.

Marshall, R. P., Methodist pastor, Brooksville, Fla.

McKeown, Boyd M., secretary, Department of Public Relations, Methodist Board of Education.

Ramm, Robert F., Methodist pastor, Plainville, Conn.

Walton, A. J., formerly superintendent, Department of Town and Country Work, Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension; now district superintendent, Clarksville District, Tennessee Conference.

On the Quest for Decisions

A WORKABLE PLAN OF EVANGELISM, *by Dawson C. Bryan. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 160 pp., $1.50.*

To one who travels across country it is noticeable that men are becoming concerned about the non-church people in the land. We have been sobered by human brutality and the use we make of our scientific skill, educational equipment and creative power.

In such an atmosphere, it is a delight to come across a book describing a workable plan of evangelism which is easily read and practical of application. Mr. Bryan has laid church workers under a debt of gratitude for the wholesome way in which he has accomplished his purpose, and the care he has used in making the steps practical.

The author avoids abstract and broad generalizations. His book is a workers' handbook and daily guide in the technique of winning persons to Christ and the Church.

The pastor who reads this book may be a master of the evangelistic technique. Such a pastor delights in comparing his methods with those of another successful worker. If he is still experimenting, the book will be stimulating and encouraging. If one should not agree in detail with all that the author suggests, he is free and under divine compulsion to devise a better way and proceed with the work, and reading the book will prove a stimulus to action.

Part I of the book deals with the development of a practical plan of evangelism in the life of the local church. The plan is such that it can be used for a charge, district, conference or episcopal area. Each of the six steps in the plan are set forth in the power of simple and direct language. Here are suggestions which a minister can study and adjust to his own situation and conception of his task.

The author's emphasis on making the power of God available to men is timely. God's power is always available. What we lack is a way of transmitting it to the point of need, or making persons aware of its availability. Part of this process is concerned with creating an understanding and hunger for the power of God in those who live in utter indifference to Him.

The headings of the chapters in the first section of the book indicate that the author is seeking to prepare the church for its task. Such headings as: "How to Find the Prospects, How to Secure the Visitors, How to Train the Visitors, How to Assimilate New Members."

The second section carries this practical application into the work of evangelism in its quest for decisions. The chapter headings indicate the helpfulness of the guidance given, and the reader is helped by suggestions for securing decisions, making visiting effective, working with difficult cases, visiting the family, and continuing the work. A number of sample forms, useful cards and records are included; also an excellent outline for a program of visitation evangelism.

Here is a timely handbook for every pastor on evangelistic effectiveness.—***A. J. Walton.***

What Is the Church?

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH, *Willett, Clark and Company, 1945. 127 pp., paper, $.75.*

To Christians around the world who seek to act corporately, "as if they were one body in a visible community," the report of the American Theological Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order is clarifying. *The Nature of the Church* brings together eleven major denominational statements which answer the basic question: What is the Church? Although these statements are written without the authority of the respecive communions, they have been carefully prepared by individuals after consultation with leading men of several denominations. The papers were read to the committee, were fully discussed, and were referred to their authors for revision or clarification before printing.

Much of the semantic confusion which often surrounds discussion is avoided by Clarence T. Craig in an introduction in which he defines *Church, Congregation, Communion, the Church Militant,* and *the Church Triumphant.* Each report follows a questionnaire.

Ministers can cite this book to laymen who over-simplify the problems of developing a world organization. For brief statements of the nature of the Church, this reviewer found the book most helpful, especially in the eleven answers to the question: "What do you consider to be the distinctive contributions that your church has to make to the Church Universal?"—***Robert F. Ramm.***

The Current Fiction

By GERALD KENNEDY

GLANCING back over the fiction of the past few months, it seems to me that the books worth remembering are the books which have emphasized character. The great sweeping plots seem to be missing, and in their place there are intimate insights into men and women as they are caught for a brief moment in some particular situation.

This impression may be a false one and just what it means so far as fiction itself is concerned, I am not prepared to say. But the six books which I shall mention briefly have this characteristic in common. The preacher will, therefore, discover in them something worth his consideration; for anything that helps us to see people is for our use.

BROWN: *A Walk in the Sun.*

The great war books for the most part are not written until sometime after the war is over. This will probably be true of the Second World War as it has been of preceeding wars. I venture to predict, however, that this book, coming out of the actual battles, will live. It is great in its simplicity. It tells the story of a few hours' experience of one platoon of Yankee soldiers on the outskirts of a beachhead battle in Italy. A freak accident kills the lieutenant. The sergeant fails to return. The men are strafed and suffer casualties. Their third commander cracks under the strain of too many weary months of battle. Still they pull themselves together and continue on their way to take a farmhouse some six miles inland.

Brown has set down in *A Walk in the Sun* the conversation that goes on between the men as they move forward. The directness of the writing and the quiet drama of the situation carries unusual power. Without any heroics we see the fundamental grandeur of man.

PROKOSCH: *Age of Thunder.*

Jean-Nicolas is sent to investigate the underground in France. There is someone within it who is a traitor, and he must be discovered if there is to be any safety. This is the story of the five nights of the journey across France to the Swiss border. There is the excitement of the dangerous journey and the atmosphere of the great war. Yet even here, the things that stand out are the people that Jean-Nicolas meets. There is the mysterious Negro, Quivar, the ruthless maquis leader, Zaba, and a delightful Italian family.

The book has action, but it also has depth which discovers the universal human values far beyond any particular situation. Prokosch is also a poet, and he finds the right words to describe the moods of men. This is apparent, particularly in the love story of Jean-Nicolas and Susanna. After the journey has been completed, an old Swiss peasant woman says, "What will peace bring this time? Peace alone brings nothing. Yes, monsieur, my mother said it to me and my grandmother before her, and it is still true—we must learn to love one another or die, and that is the only lesson, and there is no other, and that is all there is."

WECHSBERG: *Looking for a Bluebird.*

This is a series of sketches, some of them funny, others of them a little sad, all of them tremendously interesting, described by a man who among other things has been violinist in a ship's orchestra and leader of the orchestra. He meets all kinds of people, not all of them respectable, but all of them worth understanding.

Wechsberg has an eye that looks underneath the surface to discover unsuspected dignity and honorable philosophy where it is least apparent. This is definitely on the lighter side and will provide an hour or so of relaxation and enjoyment. It is good for every layman and minister to have a few disreputable friends.

WESCOTT: *Apartment in Athens.*

A sustained sense of tragedy and sadness in this book makes it somewhat similar to the old Greek plays. If this is what German occupation meant, the world must always give thanks that it did not go any farther than it

practical helps

The Church in Our Town

by Rockwell C. Smith. This first systematic treatment of the responsibility of the church to the rural community gives concrete and specific suggestions which will help any rural pastor make his church a more vital force in the community. **$1.50**

The Minister Teaches Religion

by Frank A. Lindhorst. Here are tested methods for carrying out the pastor's part in educating his people. Abreast of modern thought and techniques of Christian education, the book deals primarily with *things the minister himself can do* to improve his teaching ministry. **$1**

Come Before Winter

Clarence E. Macartney

MARKING the thirtieth anniversary of Dr. Macartney's powerful sermon, this attractive booklet offers a modern classic to all who wish to analyze its structure and appeal, to keep it as a personal remembrancer, or to give it to one in need of its urgent call to action.

The growing numbers who respond to this great sermon and year after year ask for its repetition are rapidly elevating it to the status of Russell Conwell's masterpiece, "Acres of Diamonds."

As Paul, languishing in prison, urged Timothy to "come before winter," before the season's storms had descended upon the Mediterranean and made navigation impossible, so Dr. Macartney urges, and moves, dilatory Christians to "come before winter"—before an icy hardness has locked their hearts and made it impossible to come at all. Illustrated. 50 cents.

The Will of God

Leslie D. Weatherhead

STRAIGHT thinking and high religious truth concerning the will of God make this slim volume an immeasurable help to those in trouble, who find difficulty in reconciling the will of an all-powerful and loving Father with the fiendish evil which stalks the earth.

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did. We shall never be able to repay those who endured it heroically without surrender. Mr. and Mrs. Helianos, middle-class people, go through all sorts of degradation and disgrace but at the end prove to have spirits that will not be destroyed. The strange, mad psychology of the German officer that tries to visit revenge on them even after he has taken his own life, is one of the most terrible indictments of a way of life that I have read. Once again, we look at plain men who respond to a dangerous situation with an unimagined courage. No one who reads the book will ever forget the Helianos family and the Greek heroism in the face of brutality and tyranny.

LANGLEY: *A Lion Is in the Streets.*

In spite of the usual disclaimer in the front of the book, this is almost certainly the story of a well-known southern politician of a few years ago. He had the power of leadership and rose from poor beginnings to become governor and the most powerful man in the state. He began by championing the poor. He ended by being a dictator and a tyrant. His death in all probability was one of the most fortunate things that ever happened to America.

Here we discover how a dicatorship could come to the United States, if it ever does come. You could hardly find a better illustration of Lord Acton's dictum about power corrupting.

The book has a great sweep and no one who reads it will ever forget Hank Martin, who started so bravely and ended so tragically. Salvation never comes from one powerful leader, but as the book says: "Only the people can blow the trumpet—the incorruptible trumpet of faith and justice, of equality and truth."

STEINBECK: *Cannery Row.*

John Steinbeck, in my judgment, is one of America's truly great writers. His prose flows with a simplicity that is reminiscent of the New Testament. With a few deft strokes he can paint a character and describe a situation so that never again will it be forgotten. *Cannery Row* is the story of a few of the disinherited who live on a street along the waterfront of Monterey. It has a similarity to his *Tortilla Flat.* Like one who some nineteen hundred years ago showed pity and understanding for the outcast and condemnation for the hardness of the hearts of respectable people, Steinbeck makes of his bums something noble and admirable. Like Soroyan, he is a sentimentalist, but it is a kind of sentiment that warms the heart. I think he must be a deeply religious man, whether he knows it or not.

A Walk in the Sun, by Harry Peter McNab Brown. Alfred A. Knopf, 187 pp., $2.

Age of Thunder, by Frederic Prokosch. Harper and Brothers, 311 pp., $2.50.

Looking for a Bluebird, by Joseph Wechsberg. Houghton-Mifflin Co., 210 pp., $2.50.

Apartment in Athens, by Glenway Wescott. Harper and Brothers, 268 pp., $2.50.

A Lion Is in the Streets, by Adria Locke Langley, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 482 pp., $3.

Cannery Row, by John Steinbeck, Viking Press, 208 pp., $2.

Toward Christian Race Relations

Three leaders in the field of Christian education—R. B. Eleazer, John O. Gross, and Boyd M. McKeown—review here a select list of books which might be used in preparation for Race Relations Day, Feb. 10.

RACE RIOTS AREN'T NECESSARY, *by Alfred M. Lee, Committee on Public Affairs, Inc., 30 Rockefeller Plaza, 31 pp., $.10.*

The author is a sociologist living in Detroit where his sociological training could be linked with actual experiences. He explores the sources of race riots, such as friction over jobs and housing problems, and thinks that any trained observer can predict a race riot in advance. The danger signals should be recognized and frankly considered and, if the worst comes, the author offers some important suggestions.—***JG.***

THE STORY OF THE SPRINGFIELD PLAN, *by Clarence I. Chatto and Alice L. Halligan. Barnes & Noble, Inc., 201 pp., $2.75.*

The June, 1944, issue of the *Woman's Home Companion* published an article entitled, "Your Town Can Do It." It described how Springfield, Mass., was working to immunize its children against racial and religious antagonisms through its schools. *The Story of the Springfield Plan* is a fuller treatment of the same topic. The methods followed by this school system to expunge prejudice and build understanding are described. They are simple, practical and worthy of emulating. The teachers in the schools have helped the pupils of many nationalities to appreciate their racial backgrounds and to discuss freely the contributions of various races to the making of America. Many of the prized possessions of our American heritage the children traced to the old world. A Jewish boy's position among all the children was enhanced by showing that the Hebrew people observed the innate desire for freedom, and their history reflects the value of courage and faith in God. While the book will be especially valuable to ministers in polygot centers, it will furnish many helpful suggestions to all who read it, particularly those who are trying to find ways of helping people of different racial backgrounds to live happily together.—***JG.***

A PREFACE TO RACIAL UNDERSTANDING, *by Charles S. Johnson. Friendship Press, 1936, 206 pp., $.60, paper binding; $1.50, cloth.*

This volume furnishes an excellent insight into the vexing problem of Negro-white relationships. After discussing numerous such topics as the Negro worker, the Negro college graduate, the contribution of the Negro to American civilization, and the Negro and the Church, the author in a final chapter deals effectively with some suggested next steps.—***BMM.***

EDUCATION AND THE CULTRAL PROCESS, *a Symposium edited by Charles S. Johnson, and made up of papers presented at the observance in 1941 of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of Fisk University, Nashville. University of Chicago Press, 1943, 136 pp., $1.*

This volume contains a series of scholarly chapters digging very thoroughly into the powers and possibilities of education as a factor in the resolving of racial tension and in providing a basis for peaceful relationship.—***BMM.***

BLACK FOLK THEN AND NOW, *by W. E. B. DuBois. Henry Holt & Company, 1944, 400 pp., $3.75.*

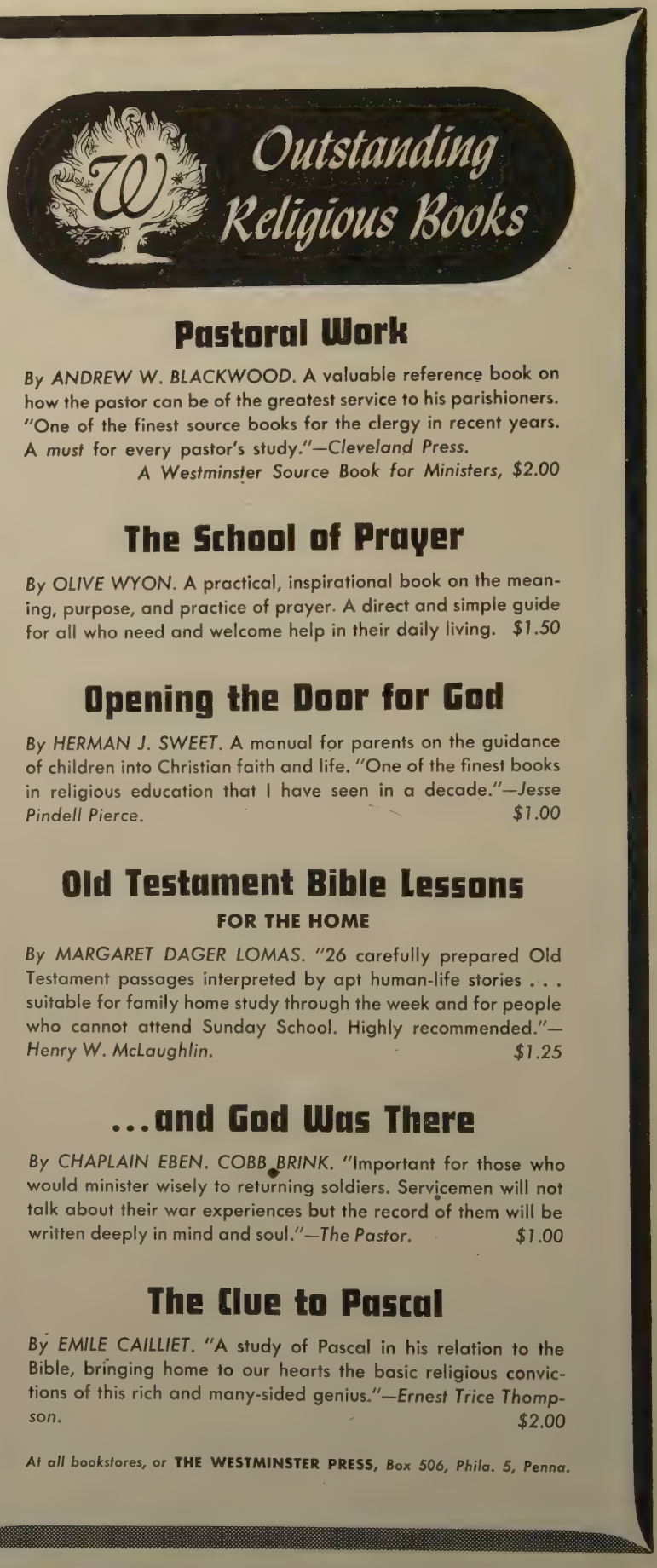
This is a story of Negro peoples of the world from pre-historic times to the present. While the author does not present it as a work of exact scholarship, it is thoroughly informational and perhaps one of the most authorative books of its kind yet produced.—***BMM.***

THE MYTH OF THE NEGRO PAST, *by Meville J. Herskovits. Harper & Brothers, 1941, 374 pp., $4.*

This book is the result of long continued study of the Negro peoples of Africa and elsewhere on the part of the writer. While slanted toward the solution of the Negro problem in the United States, it brings in related data from West Africa, South America, West Indies, etc. It attempts to set forth the fact that the Negroes brought to this country as slaves came out of a highly cultural background and a well developed civilization.—***BMM.***

THE NEGRO CARAVAN, *edited by Sterling A. Broan and others. Dryden Press, 1941, 1082 pp., $4.50; also in two vols., each $2.*

A college English professor was in the habit of saying to his students, "If you would really know any racial, national or other group of people, steep yourself in their literature." *The Negro Caravan* provides that opportunity. It is a comprehensive anthology of Negro literature and of Negro folk songs, stories and poems. Most readers of THE PASTOR would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find it an illuminating experience to browse through its pages.—***BMM.***

THE CULT OF EQUALITY, *by Stuart O. Landry. Pelican Publishing Company, 1945, 360 pp., $3.50.*

This volume, written by a man who has produced other writings in such fields as *The Power of the Press, The Great Inland Waterway Folly, Life Insurance, History and Economics,* is apparently an effort to bolster the time honored belief in white superiority. Its chief value in sermon building lies in its presentation of a viewpoint doubtless held by many of the ministers' hearers.—***BMM.***

AN AMERICAN DILEMMA, *by Gunnar Myrdal. Harper & Brothers, 1944; 2 volumes, $7.50.*

This monumental work is the product of an exhaustive study of America's major race problem, made under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation, at a cost of $25,000. Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, eminent Swedish sociologist and statesman, and a staff of seventy or more able social scientists spent a year in collecting data on all aspects of the problem. Their findings were then co-ordinated by Dr. Myrdal in the most complete and authoritative study of the subject ever made.—***RBE.***

THE BOOK OF AMERICAN NEGRO POETRY, *an anthology compiled by James Weldon Johnson. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931; 300 pp., $2.*

This book presents an exceptionally good survey of the best in Negro poetry, with biographical sketches of the authors. It contains two selections from Johnson's famous volume of Negro sermons, *God's Trombones.*—***RBE.***

ONE DESTINY, AN EPISTLE TO THE CHRISTIANS, *by Sholem Asch. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 188 pp., $1.50.*

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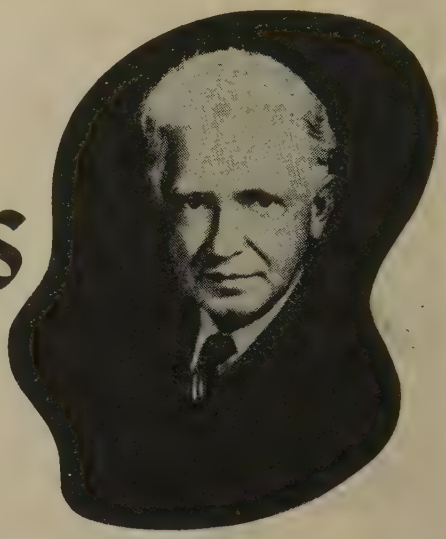

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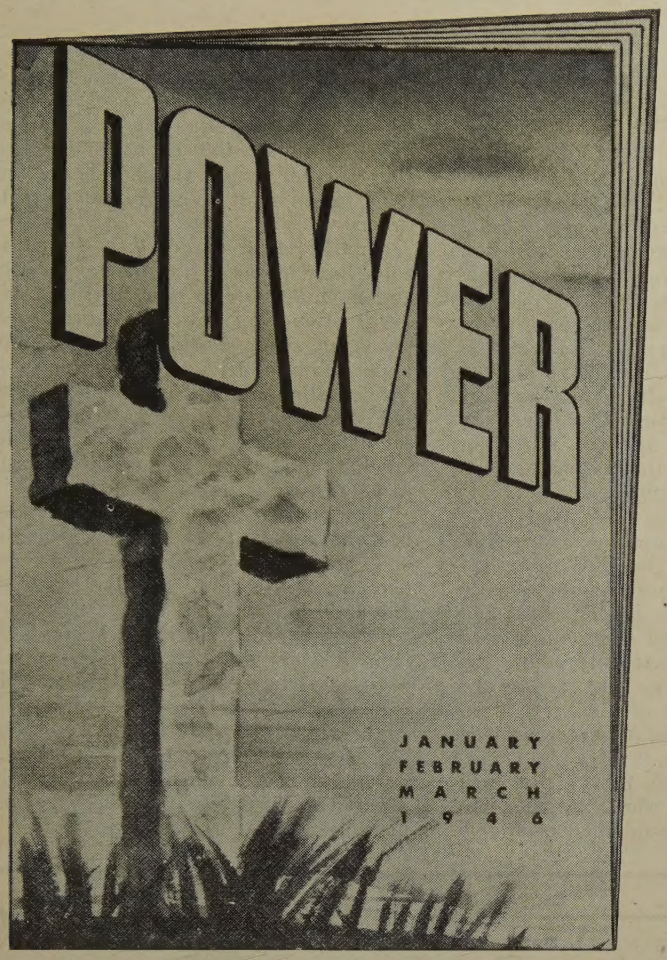

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Reading for DECEMBER **25** POWER 1945

Let's keep Christmas by realizing as fully as we can the meaning of the lines in Stephen Benet's *A Child Is Born*—

The loves we had were not enough.
Something is loosed to change the shaken world,
And with it we must change!

Our little loves have not been enough. On this Christmas day we think of a great love that gave a man to this world who has changed the shaken world. Because of His coming we dare not remain unchanged and call ourselves Christians. Whoever understands the meaning of Christmas will be compelled to understand Jesus. And understanding Jesus will transform our love. Then our little loves will take on new perspective. We shall see the people around us in the new light of knowledge, for we shall know that we cannot fully and intimately know anything that we do not love.

Let's keep Christmas by realizing that "knowing" and "loving" are inseparably bound together, that one is dependent on the other. Then in the increasing of our love we shall get understanding, and in a more thorough understanding we shall get love.

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It is not all critical. He cites evidence that the Christians have risen to new heights in their efforts to preserve the Jews and in some instances "the entire remnant of Israel which was found in the liberated countries has the Christians to thank for their preservation."—*JG.*

Books on Evangelism

In preparation for the Year of Evangelism in 1946, THE PASTOR has been reviewing books which deal fundamentally with the motives and doctrines underlying the evangelistic task. These reviews will be continued. The November selection is *God Is Not Dead*, by Bernard Iddings Bell (Harper). This month's selection is *A Workable Plan of Evangelism*, by Dawson C. Bryan (see page 40).

Other books reviewed in the series of "Books on Evangelism" have included *The Significance of the Cross*, by F. W. Dillistone (Westminster, $2.50); *The Larger Evangelism*, by John R. Mott (Abingdon-Cokesbury, $1); *Choose Ye This Day*, by Elmer G. Homrighausen (Westminster, $2.50); *Down Peacock's Feathers*, by D. R. Davies (Macmillan, $1.75); *Good News of God*, by Charles E. Raven (Harper, $1.25); *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross*, by Leslie D. Weatherhead (Abingdon-Cokesbury, $1.50); *Earth Might Be Fair*, by Richard S. Emrich (Harper, $1); *Beyond Personality*, by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, $1); *The Flower of Grass*, by Emile Cammaerts (Harper, $2).

monday morning

Ruts in the Ministry

By THE ELDER

A VERY good minister read a paper to us but destroyed much of its value with a boresome presentation. He used threadbare phrases, trite sentences, and a monotonous pitch of voice. That was typical of the way the man thinks and speaks. He is a talented man who is allowing his bad habits to dig a grave for his spiritual effectiveness.

Such destructive ruts are easy to dig. If one is not always on the alert he will find himself in one or several of them. They are usually in the form of mannerisms, pet phrases, a sameness in the composition and the repetition of favorite ideas till they become an obsession on certain subjects.

It so happens that when God made us he expected us to grow more winsome, effective and helpful as we get older. The divine organization of life is on that level. The human mind and spirit are so created that one should keep right on improving until he reaches a ripe old age. That is why the prosaic presentation of a subject is inexcusable—it is a violation of what God intended.

There are several things that will provide a "ladder" when one gets into a deep rut. One should read as widely and deeply as he can. That doesn't mean that he will be a research professor; it means that he will gather ideas from all the books and other sources that are available. Train the mind to see, hear and think about such things.

Another good "ladder" is to cultivate long periods of silence, prayer and meditation. The most thrilling experience one can have is when an idea opens up a new world, or deepens his understanding of the world he knows.

Such illuminations and insights are likely to come to the man who has a set time to think and to pray. They do much to make one contagiously fresh in his thinking and his preaching.

The best "ladder" out of these ruts is habitually to seek improvement in one's way of living and working. Everyone can do this. The smart person uses his "ladder."

A certain man said of one whose name is widely familiar: "He is not like he used to be; he has grown tremendously." A critic in a college literary society said of a boy: "I looked for his old mannerism but it had disappeared. He has improved remarkably." That is a possible improvement for us all. God intended it so.

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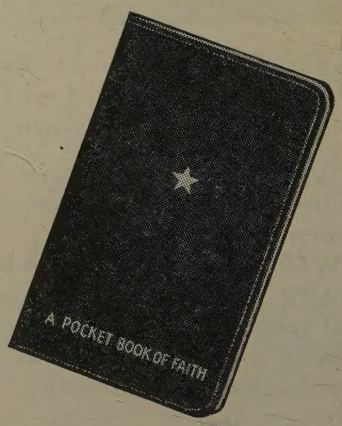

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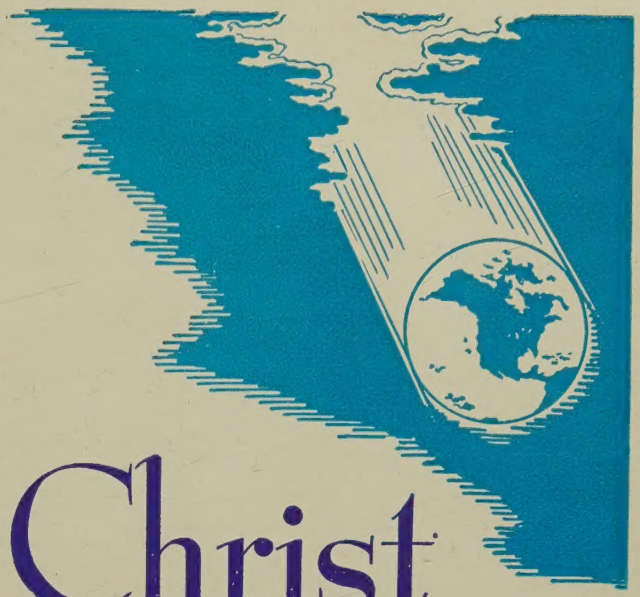

The Global Christ

by Roy Lawson Tawes, Author of "Lamps in the Darkness"

THE CONTENTS:

I. **THE GLOBAL CHRIST.** *"And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." —John 12:32*

II. **THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER.** *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." —John 6:68*

III. **WHEN IT IS HARD TO FORGIVE.** *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." —Luke 23:34*

IV. **A PARABLE OF HISTORY.** *"There arose a mighty famine in that land." —Luke 15:14*

V. **MAN'S ONLY PROGRESS.** *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and forever." —Heb. 13:8*

VI. **THE PASSION OF PAIN.** *"I thirst." —John 19:28*

VII. **MARY'S GOLD STAR.** *"There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother." —John 19:25*

VIII. **SATAN'S LOST CAUSE.** *"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." —Luke 10:18*

IX. **THE DRAMA OF A TOWEL.** *"He took a towel." —John 13:4*

X. **HIS LAST WORD UNTIL EASTER.** *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." —Luke 23:46*

XI. **THE THIRD DAY AT SUNDOWN.** *"But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; . . ." —Luke 24:21*

XII. **THE SAINTS SALUTE YOU!** *"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." —Phil. 4:22*

XIII. **WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?** *"Tarry ye . . . until ye be endued with power from on high." —Luke 24:19*

XIV. **HARVESTING A PLANET.** *"The world . . . things to come; all are yours." —Cor. 3:22*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Roy Lawson Tawes comes from a long line of seafaring folk of the Chesapeake Bay country. He spent his youth at sea, but at twenty he answered the call of the Galilean to enter the ministry. The ever increasing influence of his work is indicated by the fact that he is active and popular in work with young people and that the range of his messages is extended by radio and religious periodicals. His two previous books, *Laughing at the Saints* and *Lamps in the Darkness,* were enthusiastically received.

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He hath showed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.
He hath put down princes from their thrones. . . .

¶ For the sake of the Christian religion itself, Christmas must be rescued from the sentimentalists. ¶ The element of moral severity which is a part of the Christmas message must be restored to its true place. The sentimental interpretation seemed to have a basis in the old translation of the angels' anthem, *on earth peace, good will to men.* ¶ The Greek actually ascribes peace to men of good pleasure, that is, to men whose pleasure is in that which is good. The angelic song is not to be supposed to have ascribed peace to men of every character and of every kind of inner life. Those who were ready to take pleasure in goodness were offered the peace of God through the coming of Christ. . . . ¶ In other words, according to the Magnificat, the gift of God when Mary has brought forth her son is to be an act of judgment as well as an act of grace.—Lynn Harold Hough, in THE PASTOR (Dec., '41).